The Spiritual Outlook

Willard C. Selleck

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THE SPIRITUAL OUTLOOK

THE

SPIRITUAL OUTLOOK

A SURVEY

OF

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF OUR TIME

AS RELATED TO PROGRESS

BY

WILLARD CHAMBERLAIN SELLECK

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TO

My Father and Mother,

TO WHOM I CANNOT BE GRATEFUL ENOUGH FOR THE BOON OF EXISTENCE,

AND FOR THE LOVE THAT SHELTERED MY INFANCY,

I INSCRIBE THIS, MY FIRST PUBLISHED VOLUME,

WITH PROFOUND HONOR AND AFFECTION.

PREFACE.

THIS book undertakes a study of some of the most prominent religious aspects of modern progress. It seeks to discover and appraise the vital, spiritual values in our developing civilization. It does not profess to be complete in its presentation of existing conditions or its indication of current tendencies, but it is as comprehensive as the limits of a small volume easily allow; while, on the other hand, it is hoped that it will not be found too general to be profitable for inspiration. It aims to be constructive by appreciating facts that are encouraging, by justly interpreting positive results already reached, and by pointing out the direction in which the noblest ideals of the present age are luring us still further forward, together with some of the

practical steps which need immediately to be taken if those ideals are to be realized.

The high importance of the subjects here treated and the serious endeavor to deal with them candidly, albeit very briefly, may entitle these pages to the respectful attention of those who love Truth more than favorite systems, and who believe that at the heart of all systems are influences which have the promise and potency of some real blessing for mankind. The prevailing tone of the work is sympathetic and optimistic, although there is no flinching from the task of severe criticism where it is honestly thought to be required. The author believes thoroughly in both the intellectual and the moral helpfulness of perfect frankness, when conjoined with knowledge, justice, and absolute sincerity.

If this little volume shall give a true insight into the spiritual significance of our modern life, for the guidance of religious teachers and the comfort of the taught, amid the changes and perplexities of a time that has been called

"an age of doubt" and also "an age of faith," but that may be even more accurately characterized as an age of expansion and reconstruction, the labor of love devoted to its preparation will be amply rewarded.

WILLARD CHAMBERLAIN SELLECK.

PROVIDENCE, R. I.,
Eastertide, 1902.

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The world needs to know, when it speaks of physical discovery and material progress, that discovery itself is never physical, and that progress itself is always spiritual.
— Edward Everett Hale.

From the point of view of the spirit, the progress of history is measured, not by the spread of material conquests or the accumulation of the equipment of civilization, but by the transformation of the universe into the life of the spirit, by the progressive emancipation of the individual, and the deepening and widening of the content of his personal life. — Edward Howard Griggs, *The New Humanism.*

INTRODUCTION.

THE opening of the twentieth century has given occasion for many reviews and estimates of modern progress. Naturally they have dealt mainly with those outward phenomena in which recent development has been most striking. But the student of spiritual interests is sure that there is another story to tell which is not less inspiring, and which really interprets all else that is narrated. He rejoices in every achievement of the race whereby it has more completely mastered the material realm, and in every intellectual attainment whereby the domain of knowledge has been enlarged; but he believes that all such accomplishments find their highest consummation in a clearer disclosure of the divine meaning of human existence. Accordingly he looks at the history of the world from a religious point of view, sees it in a light that glorifies it with a

transcendent purpose, and desires to show how the struggles and triumphs of the ages are embraced in a Spiritual Providence that makes them culminate in the spiritual advancement of mankind. It is the object of the following pages to afford a few glimpses of this sublime spectacle.

The theme of these chapters, then, is religion, but religion in a broad sense, — as a living reality, a spiritual force, lying back of all its institutions, and included in the general civilization of our time. There may be those who conceive that religion is obsolescent; yet it is not religion that is obsolescent, but merely some of the transient forms in which it has found expression, some of the ideas which have been associated with it, and some of the uses to which it has been put. Religion itself is as imperishable as the soul of man; it is the vital spirit beneath all our thoughts and toils and tendencies; it is the life of God in the lives of human beings who are made in His image. As such it is not losing its power in the world, although it may be working in new directions; and I shall hope to show that the changes which are taking place in some

of its manifestations and agencies, while attended by incidental losses and dangers, are in the main fraught with vast spiritual gain for universal mankind.

If religion is included in general civilization, let us ask what civilization is. The word is not easily defined because it has a variable signification, denoting different things in different eras and among different races. But we shall get a sufficiently clear idea of its meaning if we say that it represents the ideals which a given people may cherish and also the extent to which they are realized in the organized social life of the time. In Matthew Arnold's felicitous phrase, "civilization is the humanization of man in society. Man is civilized when the whole body of society comes to live with a life worthy to be called *human*, and corresponding to man's true aspirations and powers." Speaking of "the means by which man is brought towards this goal of his endeavor," he says: "I put first among the elements in human civilization the instinct of expansion, because it is the basis which man's whole effort to civilize himself presupposes. . . . The basis being given, we may rapidly enumerate

the powers which, upon this basis, contribute to build up human civilization. They are the power of conduct, the power of intellect and knowledge, the power of beauty, the power of social life and manners. Expansion, conduct, science, beauty, manners, — here are the conditions of civilization, the claimants which man must satisfy before he can be humanized."[1]

Accepting this account of what civilization implies, and remembering that religion is included in it under the term *conduct* as Mr. Arnold employs it, we shall need to keep our minds open to these various aspects of human development if our study of present spiritual phenomena is to have much value. In pursuing a single line of interest we must guard against narrowing our view by recollecting that there are other lines; and it will be well to recollect also that the advance of civilization may not be contemporaneously co-equal on all the several lines, — that, in fact, there is often retrogression along some, while there is progress along others. If, therefore, we discover that certain traditional customs and influences are

[1] Mixed Essays, 1883.

waning, let us not hastily conclude that the world is going to ruin. What we have to deal with is the whole spiritual movement of our age, and what we particularly desire is to see how religion is involved in this, both helping it and being helped by it.

For there is really such a movement in the life of our time. Our present civilization, whatever its faults, is not stagnant. Everywhere there is activity, and it is not mainly outward; indeed our marvellous material developments are the fruit of an inner development which is essentially spiritual. Knowledge has been growing, thought broadening, skill increasing, wealth accumulating, and the race as a whole rising; and now at length a larger life is bursting upon us all. A new sense of greatness is coming to us, new hopes fill our hearts, and new endeavors engage our hands. We feel that the present is an epoch in human history, — a moment which is full of the culminations of the past, and equally full of beginnings for the future. Thus, as we shall have frequent occasion to note, it is a transitional period of vast importance; and while it involves the breaking up of some systems and

institutions which have filled a large place in the world, and will lead to the creation of new ones instead, we shall mistake seriously if we do not see that the very soul of this whole transformation is a spiritual expansion. Man is coming to a nobler conception of himself as a spiritual being, and of the universe as a spiritual home; and he is engaged in making over all his other conceptions and the external forms in which he expresses his thought and feeling, in order to harmonize himself with the new vision and the new environment. For the time being the process may seem like disintegration, but it is really reconstruction; it may seem like degeneration, but it is really development for mankind at large; and the religious element in it will not only play its part, but will surely receive its full share of the benefits, in the production of a higher, fairer, finer civilization than has prevailed hitherto.

ROMAN CATHOLICISM AS A FACTOR IN MODERN CIVILIZATION.

THE

SPIRITUAL OUTLOOK.

ROMAN CATHOLICISM AS A FACTOR IN MODERN CIVILIZATION.

WHEN we come to consider the place of religion in our modern civilization, one of the first great facts to confront us is Roman Catholicism. No other religious instrumentality has entered so largely into the production of this civilization; no other touches it at so many points; no other has such inherited resources for dealing with its multitudinous problems. Whether we regard the sphere of its operation as lying in Europe or in the Americas, we must recognize its influence as having been inextricably bound up with the fortunes of all these Western nations. Of the 452,000,000 Christians in the entire world, 210,000,000 are Roman Catholics, 92,000,000 Greek, and 150,000,000 Protestant. Of the 210,000,000 Roman Cath-

olics, 154,000,000 are in Europe, and about 12,000,000, according to Catholic authority, are in the United States — including men, women, and children. Of course the great bulk of the population of South America and Central America, as far as it has been Christianized at all, is Roman Catholic; and the Church of Rome has her missions in nearly every land where any other Christian missionaries have gone. Plainly a power that exerts so wide a sway must be seriously reckoned with in discussing the spiritual conditions, forces, and tendencies of our age; and therefore it should be truly understood.

There is, however, a great deal of misunderstanding regarding this subject. For, on the one hand, many excellent people appear to take it for granted that Roman Catholicism is antiquated, effete, and sure to lose ground as popular intelligence increases; while, on the other hand, large numbers of sincere persons believe it to be the greatest menace to our modern civil and religious liberties and to general progress with which we have to contend. Both of these views, in my judgment, are mainly erroneous, and I proceed to explain why.

1. Before we take for granted the feebleness and prospective decline of Roman Catholicism, we shall do well to look about us and see what is going on. See how strongly it establishes its churches and cathedrals in our great centres of population, as if they were to endure for ages; what vast properties it acquires, in real estate and auxiliary buildings; with what sagacity and efficiency it conducts its work, distributing its forces by a comprehensive parish system, utilizing each church for several congregations perhaps, and ministering to the needs of its people by a large staff of clergy and a number of trained assistants. See how diligently it instructs its children, watching, following, holding them, and doing everything to train them up to be faithful communicants; how it segregates them, as far as possible, and puts them into its parochial schools; how it multiplies and strengthens its colleges, in order to offer adequate inducements for its young men to withdraw from all other higher institutions of learning; and what a great university it is building up in Washington to crown its own vast educational system. See its religious orders, — its sisterhoods with their con-

vents, its brotherhoods and associations with their various activities, all infused with the spirit of devotion; see likewise its humanitarian agencies, — its orphanages, hospitals, and asylums, never better administered than now. Finally, see how bold and enterprising, how alert and far-seeing is its attitude toward the new developments and opportunities of this western hemisphere, — how quickly it adjusts its administration of its own interests to the change of government in Cuba and Porto Rico; how favorably it looks on the principle of religious liberty guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States, because it insures a free field and no favor; how confidently it expects to have an unparalleled career of growth and power in this great country; and how industriously it is prosecuting at present its missions to non-Catholics, aggressively seeking to make converts by the direct work of the Paulist Fathers. In view of these facts we can hardly admit that there is either weakness or inefficiency on the part of Roman Catholicism in our day. On the contrary, so far is the Roman Church from showing any signs of senility that I do not know where

else to look, throughout Christendom, for a fresher vigor than she has exhibited during the illustrious pontificate of Leo XIII.

2. Regarding the alleged danger which Roman Catholicism forebodes to American institutions, it may be said that there is not half the ground for apprehension which is usually supposed to exist. In all fairness let us ask what Roman Catholicism is in the world for. To perpetuate itself, to extend its dominion, to direct the course of civilization? Yes, in a considerable degree; that is what every church is in the world for, partly. But why does the Roman Church want to do this? Because she honestly believes she is Divinely ordained to this momentous business, — to teach men, to control men, to train men, in order that she may save them. Deep down in her heart, she seeks the good of mankind, according to her understanding of it: she wants to overcome the ruin caused by sin, to establish righteousness in the earth, to build the kingdom of heaven and make it universal. This is what we all want to do. She works according to her conceptions of the truth and what she regards as the supreme needs

of human beings. In my opinion she widely and fundamentally misconceives the truth, as I shall try to indicate later on; but I believe her to be as sincere as any other church, and to be genuinely devoted to the moral welfare of individuals and nations. She sees the misery which sin entails everywhere, the evils that blight the souls of men, the corruptions that undermine the fabric of civilization; she is anxious for the safety, the eternal salvation, of little children, of youths and maidens, of old men and women; she feels the burdens of the poor, the hardships of the toiling masses, the awful woe of the victims of vice and crime; and, according to her conception of the help they need, she reaches out her strong hand, in the name of Jesus Christ, to uplift and redeem them. Thus she works, or means to work, for the good of the world; she is the foe of wickedness, setting her face like a flint against unrighteousness, recognizing sin as a terrible reality, and seeking in her own way to counteract where she cannot prevent it. She aims to educate mankind in the fear of God, and she feels that she alone is empowered of God to be a sufficient bulwark against the destructive

forces of moral evil that assail the children of men. Because of this mighty faith in her heart, however mistakenly founded, however unwarranted in its boastfulness, and because of the magnificent organization with which she seeks to fulfil what she conceives to be her mission, I cannot but regard the Church of Rome, in spite of her errors, as a tremendous agency for preserving and extending, in the main, the great interests of our Christian civilization. We could ill afford to get along without her, if it were possible; and for a few additional reasons, which I cannot take time to consider here but to which I may allude before I close, I look to see her influence increase, during the next half-century at least, as it has never before done in America.

If it be asked what are the principal sources of the marvellous power of Roman Catholicism, I must answer by simply mentioning them, without much comment. They are, I think, such as these: Its antiquity, having existed ever since the days of the apostles, and possessing thus the charm which everything hoary, august, and sacred has for the human mind; its inheritance of the

spirit, not a little of the form, and somewhat of the splendor of the Roman Empire and the riches of the pagan civilization which it embodied, — so that we may justly say that the soul of the Roman Empire lives on in the Roman Catholic Church, and still rules the world in a wonderful way; its cosmopolitan character, by virtue of which it continually carries the whole world in mind, addresses itself to the needs of all races, in spite of their diversity, and unites them all in its worship, its ideas, and its discipline; its long experience in dealing with inferior peoples, subduing the savage, civilizing the barbarian, restraining violence, and inculcating higher ideals of justice and mercy, — out of which, of course, has come an infinite fund of wisdom and courage; its splendid organization, built up and perfected through this vast and varied experience, until it may be said to be the most complete, as it is the most potent, single organization on earth; its manifold ministry to human nature, touching it not alone on the religious side, but also on the ethical side, the intellectual side, the æsthetic side, and quickening every better impulse by which man is prompted

to live out a fuller and truer life; its very definite system of teaching, made palpable and imposing to rude minds, coherent and logical to others, so that no one is left to drift or be storm-driven on the sea of vague speculation; its use of the great principle of authority, to which — say what we will — the multitudes of men defer, and upon which they feel themselves dependent; and, above all, its proclamation, however crudely and erroneously, of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, — telling the story of his life, celebrating its events in music, painting, and sculpture, setting forth his teachings, inculcating somewhat of his spirit, and by all these influences attaching people to him by attaching them to his visible and holy Church on earth.

Let me supplement this my own account of the main sources of the power of Roman Catholicism by a brief quotation from each of two very competent judges, neither more friendly than I. Says James Anthony Froude: "The strength of Romanism lay where it still lies, in the craving of human nature for authoritative certainty about religion and our own souls. Death, when our short lives are over, lies before all of us as an

inevitable fact, — death and the consciousness of the many sins which we have all committed. To make existence tolerable, some fixed belief seems necessary as to the meaning of life and as to our condition hereafter. Such a belief Romanism, with all its faults, professed to give, and if the authority of Rome was overthrown, there seemed nothing before any one but blank darkness." [1] The other writer is Matthew Arnold, who says: "Men conscious of a bent for being modest, temperate, kindly, affectionate, find themselves shameless, dissolute, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. The experience is as old as the world, and the misery of it. And it is no cure whatever to be told that the Pope is not infallible, or that miracles do not happen; but a cure, a divine cure, for the bondage and the misery, has been found for nearly two thousand years to lie in the word, the character, the influence of Jesus. In this cure resides the power and the permanence of the Christian religion. . . . And if there is a thing specially alien to religion, it is divisions; if there is a thing specially native to religion, it

[1] Council of Trent, p. 55.

is peace and union. Hence the original attraction towards unity in Rome, and hence the great charm and power for men's minds of that unity when once attained. All these spells for the heart and imagination has Catholicism to Catholics in addition to the spell for the conscience of a divine cure for vice and misery. And whoever treats Catholicism as a nuisance, to be helped to die out as soon as possible, has the heart, the imagination, and the conscience of Catholics in just revolt against him." [1]

And yet, after all this appreciation, which I do not abate and in which I am perfectly candid, I must say with equal candor that I think Roman Catholicism false and baneful in at least three or four important respects.

I. I believe its theory of the nature and work of Christianity to be grossly erroneous. What is that theory? Briefly stated, it is as follows:

God Almighty, the Creator of the universe, dwelling in ineffable glory in the heavens, came into this world nineteen hundred years ago, in the form of a man, being miraculously born of a virgin who herself was immaculate from the time

[1] Mixed Essays — Irish Essays, pp. 85, 87.

of her conception in her mother's womb; and his name was called Jesus. He lived the life of a child; he grew to manhood; at about the age of thirty he entered upon a public ministry of teaching and healing, lasting nearly three years. In the course of this he called around him twelve disciples; he chose one of them, Peter, to be head of the company, having authority over all the rest; he gave into his hands, to be transmitted to his successors in office, the keys of the kingdom, with power to bind and loose; he left on deposit with them a fund of divine grace, to be communicated and dispensed to mankind through certain sacraments; and thus he established his Church on earth, having a visible organization, a palpable government, and a spiritual potency for the salvation of men from sin and everlasting perdition. Peter came to Rome, where he founded a church, suffered martyrdom, and bequeathed to the Roman bishop his divine prerogatives; and he and all his official successors, that is, the Roman pontiffs, have been the vicegerents of God on earth, appointed to teach, rule, and redeem mankind in place of Christ, who returned to heaven after his resurrection. Thus

the Christian Church came into existence; it is the only channel through which God's grace can flow to the children of men; and no church is truly Christian that cannot trace the stream of its organic and spiritual life through this authoritative and apostolic channel to the same Fountain-Head in Jesus Christ.

Such, for substance and essence, is the Roman Catholic theory of Christianity, as accurately as I can express it in a few words. I might occupy much space in citations explicating it, but the resulting impression would in no vital particular be different. Of course there is a vast body of theological and ecclesiastical doctrine underlying and surrounding this conception, which might be discussed at great length; but I believe the meaning of it all to be fairly summed up in the concise statement just submitted.

In promulgating this theory the Romanist seeks to substantiate it by appealing, not mainly to the teachings of the New Testament, but to the traditions and practices of the Fathers, and more especially to the Church itself as seen in its continuity, its unity, its universality, its wisdom and holiness, and the immense benefits

which it has conferred upon the human race. In the language of the Vatican Council he says: "The Church itself, by its marvellous propagation, its eminent sanctity, its inexhaustible fruitfulness in all good things, its catholic unity and invincible stability, is a vast and perpetual motive of credibility, and an irrefragable witness of its own Divine legation." That is to say, the Church itself, by virtue of its history and the qualities which it exhibits, is a sufficient source of evidence to prove its claim to a divine origin and mission. In expanding this idea the Catholic dwells fondly and eloquently, as he may easily and justly do, upon the splendid career which the mighty institution has had. "See," he says, "how this wonderful Church has existed, in an unbroken line of descent, from Jesus Christ to Leo XIII.; see how it has overspread the world; see how it is one and the same everywhere and always, having one system of government, one visible head on earth, the vicar of its invisible Head in heaven, having one form of worship, having one faith; see what it has done to control, civilize, and refine the nations; see how it has

stood for morality, domestic purity, and social order; see its marvellous philanthropic enterprises, its charitable institutions, its brotherhoods and sisterhoods devoted to benevolence; see its contributions to art and learning; and above all see its host of saintly men and women, martyrs, confessors, and heroes, who have lived holy lives and lent an additional ray of glory to the spiritual splendor of this imperial Church. Who can doubt that it is divine? 'In this Church, if we be reasonable men, we are forced to recognize the true Church of Christ and the only lawful claimant to that title.'"[1] Thus he argues; and incidentally or additionally he maintains that this Church has been divinely assisted, being enlightened and guided by the Holy Ghost, from the beginning, so as to have been preserved pure and blameless, however many unworthy or wicked officials and members it may have had; so as to have taught the truth with unerring certainty; and so as to be an infallible guide in all matters of religion and morals.

I might quote extensively to show that this

[1] Rev. Fr. Stang.

is the Roman Catholic position, but a single reference will suffice. Cardinal Manning's article entitled "The Church Its Own Witness," in *The North American Review* for September, 1888, is an explicit and able contention for every idea which I have here set forth; and he summarizes by affirming: —

"First — That the imperishable existence of Christianity, and the vast and undeniable revolution that it has wrought in men and in nations, in the moral elevation of manhood and womanhood, and in the domestic, social, and political life of the Christian world, cannot be accounted for by any natural causes, or by any forces that are, as philosophers say, *intra possibilitatem naturæ*, within the limits of what is possible to man.

"Second — That this world-wide and permanent elevation of the Christian world, in comparison with both the old world and the modern world outside of Christianity, demands a cause higher than the possibility of nature.

"Third — That the Church has always claimed a Divine origin and a Divine office and authority in virtue of a perpetual Divine assistance. To this even the Christian world, in all its fragments external to the Catholic unity, bears witness. It is

turned to our reproach. They rebuke us for holding the teaching of the Church to be infallible. We take the rebuke as a testimony of our changeless faith. . . . The claim of the Catholic Church to a Divine authority and to a Divine assistance is one and the same in every age, and is identical in every place. . . . It knows its own history, and is the supreme witness of its own legation."

Now I have said that I believe this theory of the nature and work of Christianity to be grossly erroneous. I flatly deny that the facts of the New Testament warrant it. Were it broached now *de novo*, it would not stand twenty-four hours in the face of modern critical scholarship. It survives because of its historic associations, embodiment, and momentum. To be sure, there is truth enough at the heart of it to carry an immense amount of error and to vitalize any church that sincerely embraces it, namely, the truth of the redeeming power of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, which is common to all Christians; but the husk of this truth is, for the most part, crude assumption and misinterpretation.

1. It is an assumption to hold that Jesus Christ was God Almighty, that he was born of a

virgin, that he founded an episcopal church by appointing Peter chief over all the other apostles, and that he left with this church a deposit of divine grace to be dispensed to mankind in certain prescribed ways. The only shred of these elaborate dogmatic conceptions contained in the New Testament is the notion of the virgin-birth, and nowhere in that whole mass of literature is any such importance attached to it as the Catholic theory implies, while it is not even once inculcated by the Master himself.

The unbiased reader of the New Testament obtains an altogether different idea of Jesus and his work. The picture which he sees in the Gospels is of a noble Teacher, humble, reverent, heavenly-minded, claiming for himself no miraculous birth, no perfection, no infallibility even; going about doing good, inculcating high and holy lessons, instilling the most beautiful and blessed principles of life and conduct ever known among men, and himself exemplifying them with wondrous fidelity and sweetness; calling about him twelve lowly men to be his disciples, companying with them, talking to them, educating them, and exerting his uplifting and sanctifying

influence upon them; then, after convincing them that he was the true Messiah, the Christ, and leading them to an earnest acknowledgment of their faith in him as such, dying a cruel death and leaving his sublime cause in their hands, absolutely without any other organization than was naturally implied in their common spiritual experiences and their bond of union with him, their dear Lord and Master. By these ties they were held together, and they drew others to them, — the ties of sacred memory, great religious ideas, a profound and blessed quickening of soul, a tender sympathy and love, and a wonderful hope of a speedy return of their glorified Redeemer, bringing a marvellous change to pass in the world. They expected the end of all things to come quickly; they did *not* expect any such mighty Institution to arise as the Christian Church at length became. During nearly two centuries there was no such church, but just this simple, natural, spiritual faith, association, and expectation, together with the proclamation of the "good news" wherever opportunity offered.

2. It is by no means certain that Peter ever went to Rome. The best scholars are still

divided regarding this matter. But suppose it were proved that he did go there, and that he consecrated the bishop of Rome to be his successor: consider the real meaning of the theory of apostolic succession, which this concession is assumed to warrant. It means that divine truth, spiritual grace, saving faith, and holy love can be transmitted only *through an office!* As well might one say that the ideas and spirit of the Declaration of Independence can be perpetuated and communicated only by and through the Presidents of the United States! Not so does truth do its work in the world. Spiritual possessions are transmitted by spiritual means. Christ's gospel flows into any and every heart that opens to receive it. Man is not the child of the devil, but the child of God; he is not to be rescued from eternal peril by a charm or by magic or by the hand of a mere functionary; but the Divine Spirit is like the wind that "bloweth where it listeth," and the beautiful teachings of Jesus Christ, with all the joy and strength they bring, may be as effectually inculcated by a simple-minded but devout-hearted woman as by a cowled and cassocked priest. It

is not the *office holders* in the Christian Church who have built the kingdom of heaven, but the men and women who have lived Christ-like lives, whether in office or out of office. Such men as Dwight L. Moody and Henry Drummond, and such women as Frances E. Willard and Maude Ballington Booth, though not ordained by any church, have been as truly appointed by God to their work, and as truly efficient in it, as was ever any ecclesiastic; and yet the theory of apostolic succession would lend no sanction to their holy ministry. Surely this does not savor of the spirit of Christ, who said, "Forbid him not; for no man can do a mighty work in my name, and lightly speak evil of me."[1] Nor can it be wise in the long run; for the world needs the services of all its seers and reformers, as of all its singers and scholars, to make known the eternal spiritual realities; and the Christianity of Jesus Christ is large enough to afford inspiration, scope, and benediction for them all.

3. There are a number of specific assertions and implications, involved in the Roman Catholic theory, which I consider fundamentally false,

[1] Mark ix. 39.

but which I cannot take space to discuss, — such, for instance, as the following:[1] "that the act of faith is an imperative act of the will" — whence it follows that unbelief is disobedience, and heresy is rebellion, and whence is the justification of coercion; "that the diversities and contradictions generated by all human systems prove the absence of Divine authority;" that "the human intellect, therefore, can give no sufficient account of the identity of the Catholic faith in all places and in all ages by any of its natural processes or powers;" that "the Church at this hour is a world-wide witness, an unerring judge and teacher, divinely guided and guarded in the truth;" and that the errors of the human intellect cannot fasten upon its faith, "nor the immoralities of the human will fasten upon its sanctity." These are bold and earnest claims, sincerely made; but they are simply the logical extremes to which the mind is carried by the erroneous hypothesis of the Divine institution and guidance of the Roman Catholic Church as the only true channel for the stream of Christian influence to flow through the world.

[1] See Cardinal Manning's article above referred to.

II. Growing out of this false theory is a mistaken conception of the nature of religion and the religious life. Roman Catholicism makes the chief element of religion to consist in obedience, submission to authority, compliance with prescribed rules and regulations, and dependence upon certain rites and ceremonies called sacraments. All the mysteries of life, death, and the unknown beyond are utilized, and all the hopes, fears, and affections of the human heart are appealed to, in order to secure this result; and alas! the whole spiritual fabric is supported by two gigantic falsehoods which in themselves are enough to condemn any system of theology, — the doctrine of total depravity, and the doctrine of endless punishment. Far, far from all this was the teaching of Jesus. He did, indeed, inculcate obedience; but it was obedience to the moral law which he enjoined; and he fought with all his might against the commandments, ordinances, and institutions of men. He made religion to consist in a secret, private, personal, spiritual experience of the individual soul; and he never dreamed of establishing any such sacramental, sacerdotal, and

ecclesiastical system as Roman Catholicism represents and some of its pale imitations emulate. While they borrow from him their chief value by purveying some of the blessed truths which he taught, they claim from him a sanction for their elaborate institutionalism that is not warranted by any of his utterances, and that implies a type of religion which is distinctly contrary to his simple, informal, liberal, and vital spirituality.

III. In consequence of the extremes to which this twofold principle of authority on the one hand and obedience on the other hand is pushed, Romanism leads inevitably, and has led in fact, to a denial of the rights of the individual conscience and to a square opposition to the spirit of modern liberalism in religion, government, and inquiry. By the condemnations promulgated, in 1864, by Pope Pius IX., in connection with the so-called "Syllabus of Errors," and by the Decrees of the Vatican Council, in 1870, confirming these, and also enunciating the doctrine of Papal Infallibility, that mighty Church has set its face against all progress which it does not itself control. I know how it poses as the friend of freedom and progress; but

read Pope Leo's "Letter on Americanism," issued in January, 1899, and you will plainly see how both freedom and progress must be submitted, in the last analysis, to the Church's regulation and approval. The same thing is true respecting modern learning — one would almost think, to read the utterances of Archbishop Satolli,[1] for instance, that it is the only great friend learning has ever had; but take the single matter of Biblical Criticism for a test. According to the Vatican Decrees, the Pope is infallible in his official decisions in matters of faith and morals. Well, the Pope in such a decision has said:

"By supernatural power, God so moved and impelled them to write" — meaning the Biblical authors — "He was so present to them — that the things which He ordered, and those only, they, first, rightly understood, then willed faithfully to write down, and finally expressed in apt words and with infallible truth." Plainly this maintains the infallibility and Divine origin of Scripture. Suppose, now, that errors are *proved* to exist in the Bible, as has been the case already in many instances: immediately here is a con-

[1] See the volume of his addresses, "Church and State."

flict, and the Roman Church shuts the door against all new truth. The late Professor St. George Mivart, a modern scientific scholar, and during his long life a devoted apologist for Roman Catholicism, found this out to his great sorrow just before his recent death.[1]

With reference to this whole false attitude I must say that I am confident it will sooner or later prove a hindrance, not only to the progress of learning, but to the usefulness of the Roman Church itself. I agree again with Matthew Arnold that, "as experience widens, as the scientific and dogmatic pretensions of the Church become more manifestly illusory, its tone of certitude respecting them, so unguarded, so reiterated, and so grossly calculated for immediate and vulgar effect, will be an embarrassment to it."[2] And I would say, with Mr. Lowell, —

> "Nothing that keeps thought out is safe from thought.
> For there 's no virgin-fort but self-respect,
> And Truth defensive hath lost hold on God."[3]

But now, in conclusion, notwithstanding these

[1] See North American Review, April, 1900.
[2] Mixed Essays, p. 89. [3] The Cathedral.

criticisms, I repeat my appreciation of the better side of Roman Catholicism, and affirm my confidence that it will have a wonderful sway, and perhaps a considerable growth, in the immediate future. The reasons for such an opinion may be briefly stated.

1. The Roman Church nourishes an ardent piety. While its type of piety appears distorted, as compared with the standard exemplified by Jesus, and is more consonant with the ideals and spirit of mediævalism than with those of the present age, yet it is a genuine thing. It is sincere, earnest, consistent, and potent. The human heart is made for religious devotion as surely as for human sympathy and love; and the church that provides adequately for the nurture, expression, and use of this beautiful quality will hold the people because it feeds, helps, sanctifies, and redeems them. The spiritual ministry of Roman Catholicism in these respects is ample, powerful, loving, and unremitting. It cannot fail to bless vast multitudes of soul-hungry men and women in the future as it has done in the past.

2. Its humanitarian services are varied, exten-

sive, and wise. The energy which it turns into channels of practical beneficence is tremendous, and the uplift which it thus gives to the civilization of our age is of measureless worth. Long after its theology becomes effete, and its eschatology loses its terrors, and its ecclesiastical autocracy yields to the demands of the democratic spirit, its Christ-like labors of love for the destitute, the suffering, the ignorant, the wicked, performed with unfailing fidelity and adorned with "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," will render its mission on earth a blessed one and will attest its divine character by the truest of signs.

3. There is, just now, a marked and widespread tendency in the Christian world toward ritualism and unity, even as there is in the political world a movement toward socialism, along with the growth of the principle of combination in the economic world, — all together constituting, for the time being, a kind of groundswell in the direction of centralization. It is in part the inevitable reaction from an excessive individualism, and in part the new development, brought to pass in our time, of the social rela-

tionships of every human life and the social bearings of all vital interests. The Church of Rome, being the most conspicuous example of the success of organization, centralized power, and liturgical worship, is likely to profit by these conditions more largely than any other religious body — until the tendency referred to shall have spent its force or shall have been countervailed, as must ultimately be the case, by a wise safeguarding of that true individualism for the enhancement of which all social organization really exists.

4. The present is an age of unrest, perplexity, and anxiety in respect to religious doctrines. Multitudes of people are disturbed and know not what to believe. Yet life goes on bringing its trials and troubles; sin and sorrow are busy; hearts are crushed; and human souls cry out for help, for light, for consolation. To all such the Church of Rome stands, apparently unshaken, appealing to them to come home and rest. Her appeal is essentially false, because she bids them stop thinking and repose their trust in an external authority; but it will be none the less — rather it will be all the more — effective with

those who are weary of thought, doubt, and uncertainty; while to those who have been baffled by sin or overwhelmed by grief, the refuge offered by her all-embracing arms will seem like a mother's solace or a haven of peace.

In view of the foregoing facts it is reasonable to expect that the Roman Catholic Church, with her great past, her splendid administration, her large corps of capable leaders, her army of trained servants, her millions of devoted communicants, her educational resources, and, above all, her spiritual message to a race of beings who must ever face the mystery of existence, will have in this new world a grand career of growth and influence. Nor can it be doubted that her ministry will be a slowly broadening one, in thought as well as in service; or that she will prove herself to be, on the whole, a constructive factor in the civilization of the immediate future.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF PROTESTANTISM TO SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL PROGRESS.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF PROTESTANTISM TO SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL PROGRESS.

HE second great factor in producing the civilization of our age, embodying the influence of religion, and helping to shape the developments of the immediate future, is Protestantism. While, taking the world as a whole, its numerical following is not quite so large as that of Roman Catholicism, being in the ratio of about five to seven, it is to be noted that its adherents are mainly among the most progressive people of the earth, — the inhabitants of Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. Of course there are Protestants elsewhere, notably in Scandinavia, Holland, and Belgium, where I suppose nearly the whole population may be so classed; and also in France, Italy, and Austria, to a gratifying extent; and in the various missionary lands to even a more encouraging degree: but still it is

true that the chief strength of Protestantism lies, as it has done from the first, in countries of the Teutonic race and its kindred. If the power of this race is yet increasing and to increase, as appears altogether probable, the outlook for Protestantism, on this particular score at least, is quite auspicious.

Because of this very significant fact, that the most powerful and enterprising nations, excepting Russia, are predominantly Protestant, and are now more likely than ever to extend their sway throughout the world, it is highly important that we should understand the true nature, meaning, and bearing of Protestantism. What is its essential character, what has been its distinctive service, and what are its present weaknesses and dangers? The only warrant for attempting to answer this complex question at all is a sincere desire to answer it as justly as possible.

Our study of Roman Catholicism has shown us that it makes an immense use of the twofold principle of authority and obedience; that it reduces the religious life largely to docility, compliance, and dependence upon the sacra-

ments and the priesthood; and that the Roman Church as an organization, with its peculiar methods and marvellous power, subsists mainly by virtue of this generic conception. Now, we cannot deny that there is much room and need in our human world for the operation of such a principle. It is often said that races are like individuals, in that they have their childhood, their maturity, and perhaps their old age. Well, all children and childlike peoples need for a time to be controlled, taught, disciplined, and guided; and hosts of strong men who have so abused their freedom as to make shipwreck of life need to be dealt with as children. But individuals and races do not remain in their childhood forever, and not every lusty free man loses self-control and goes to ruin. Hence there are limits to the place of authority and submission in all institutions that undertake to govern and educate mankind. A glance at history will reveal a stupendous illustration of this truth.

The ancient Romans had a genius for government. They were a conquering, practical, orderly people. They built up the greatest and best Empire of antiquity, comprising all the

then civilized nations; and in its dealings with alien or inferior races, subjugating and incorporating them, it was more liberal and just than any previous Power. Upon the decline and fall of this Empire, to which many causes contributed, the Roman Catholic Church succeeded to its mission. A young institution, ardent, earnest, fearless, inspired with a holier ideal than was ever known before, it was the only agency to cope with the gigantic task of saving out of the ruins of the pagan civilization what was worth saving, of taming and Christianizing the overflowing barbarian hordes, and of helping to establish the new governments of the rising nations of northern and western Europe. Nobly did it meet the emergency; for nearly a thousand years did it control the situation, and for most of that time wisely and well; and the vastness of the service which it thus rendered to the mediæval and the modern world every intelligent, fair-minded man gladly admits to-day.

But those young European nations, those Goths and Vandals, those Franks and Germans, those Angles and Saxons, were not always to remain in their childhood. They grew rapidly

in numbers, power, and intelligence; and the world changed wonderfully from the Fall of Rome to the Discovery of America, — the Empire of Charlemagne came and went, Feudalism had its day and was ceasing to be, the Crusades were over, having broken up the stagnation of society and afforded a wider outlook, the light of the New Learning was spreading, and the tide of nationalism was rising full and strong. Withal, alas! the Church itself had grown proud, worldly, and corrupt. Hence it came about that the strong hand of this mighty Institution, which was at first laid upon those rude peoples to restrain, guide, and help them, was felt at length, when they had grown to maturity, to be a hand of iron to hurt, hamper, and crush all that was best within them. Thus, as Dr. Schaff has said, "from being a Tutor the Church became a Tyrant;" and under all the conditions nothing but the ground-swell of a tremendous revolt could redeem the evil time.

The particular form in which the revolt actually expressed itself is a secondary matter. We shall mistake profoundly if we do not thoroughly understand that the Reformation of the fifteenth

and sixteenth centuries was fundamentally and essentially a declaration of independence on the part of people who had come of age and were determined to put away childish things. It was prompted immediately by certain gross abuses which had grown up in the Church, such as the moral prostitution involved in the sale of indulgences, the profligacy of many of the clergy and monks, and the undue interference of the ecclesiastical authorities in secular affairs. But all this was only fuel for the fire that had been long smouldering and was now bursting into flame. Underneath the whole agitation and protest was the increasing spirit of liberty, which was native to all the various branches of the Teutonic race, and which was bound soon or late to break with the absolute autocracy of Roman Catholicism. Martin Luther was the chief Voice crying in the wilderness of his time in the tones of this spirit; but he did not stand or work alone: behind him were the deep, instinctive tendencies of his countrymen, however undeveloped in some quarters; and before him floated the new, divine ideal of the new age that was dawning in the history of the world.

Now, from this cursory review — all too brief, no doubt, but accurate, I believe, as far as it goes — the reader will see that the genesis of Protestantism was really an assertion of individualism, — the rights of the individual, the capacity of the individual, the ability of the individual. For this is precisely what it amounted to, and it was not long in coming to this, its legitimate purport. Let me proceed to show how such was necessarily the case, and how the great principle has wrought in the spiritual and social progress of the last four centuries.

I. When the Reformers protested against the excesses and abuses of the Roman Ecclesiasticism, and contended not only for the right of each nation to manage its own civil affairs, but also for the right of every person to think for himself, to read the Bible for himself, to follow the dictates of his own conscience, and to minister to his own household if he saw fit, there was implied in all this the whole fruitful idea of the inherent excellence of human nature. It meant that every man, high or low, has certain *rights* which all potentates are bound to respect, and that the first of these rights is freedom, — free-

dom of person, freedom of thought, freedom of action. It meant also that every man is *capable* of taking care of himself, — of learning the truth, of shaping his own conduct and character, of finding his own pathway to usefulness and honor, to God and heaven. It meant, therefore, that every man is *able* to master himself and his little part of the world, to improve himself and his circumstances, and to achieve his proper destiny as a responsible being, without the control or assistance of any extraneous authority. What is all this but the assertion of the worth and the claims of the individual, as opposed to an overawing, repressive, and perhaps oppressive institutionalism? and what is such an assertion but the radical truth of Christianity regarding the nature of man as a child of God come to its legitimate result in the development of personal character?

But one cannot fail to perceive that this whole proceeding was tantamount to a denial of the divine constitution of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. The claim to have been thus constituted had been put forth, extended, imposed, and acquiesced in for a thousand years; and in the fact that it was unquestioned by the people at large

lay the immediate source of the absolute power of the entire papal system. That monumental pretension was shattered for all of like attitude when, at the Diet of Worms, Luther stood up before his enemies and, as Mr. Froude says, "in a clear, ringing voice, which still vibrates across the centuries, answered: 'Councils have erred. Popes have erred. Prove to me out of the Scriptures that I am wrong, and I submit. Till you have proved it my conscience binds me. I can do no other. God help me. Amen.'"[1] Luther himself was not at first aware of the full import of his heroic action, nor did any of his sympathizers dream of all the ultimate consequences which it involved; but subsequent history has unfolded its larger meanings, and we can now see that, in his defiance of Rome and his bold though unwitting assertion of individualism, he struck a most effective blow for the emancipation of the human soul, and broke the spell of that false dogmatic and ecclesiastical absolutism which had dominated Europe for ten centuries.

II. A little reflection will show that it is logically but a short step from the achievement of

[1] Council of Trent, pp. 51, 52.

such religious liberty to the attainment of corresponding civil liberty. A repudiation of the Divine authority of Popes leads straight and quick to a denial of "the divine right of kings." European society had suffered from both of these ideas, and needed to be delivered from the thraldom of both. The deliverance began to be realized in the Protestant assertion of individualism, — the rights of the individual, the capacity of the individual, the ability of the individual. For when you contend that the human mind can think for itself, find out the truth for itself, follow safely the guidance of its own reason and the dictates of its conscience, understand the Bible for itself, approach God and commune with Him without priest or ritual, how far will it be to the notion that each man might and should have something to say about the governmental arrangements of society? Thus Christian individualism leads directly to political democracy; and although, as a matter of fact, it has taken centuries to get this great truth wrought into the fabric of modern civil government, and those centuries have been filled with strife, and the task is not yet finished, still the logical con-

nection is as close as I have indicated. A religious doctrine that exalts man and teaches him to be independent, intellectually and spiritually, inevitably makes him worthy to be a free citizen; and being worthy, he soon demands his rights. On the contrary, a religious doctrine that depreciates man, calling him naturally depraved and reprobate, and teaching him to be submissive and dependent, conduces to autocracy in both Church and State. It was one hundred and fifteen years from the Diet of Worms, in 1521, to the days of Roger Williams, in 1636; and it was two hundred and fifty-five years to the Declaration of American Independence, in 1776; but both the work of Roger Williams and the establishment of this great Republic rest back upon the instincts, ideas, and principles which were vital to the Germanic people, and which were so valiantly expressed by Martin Luther before the assembled dignitaries of all Europe. Accordingly Guizot is right in saying that the Reformation "banished, or nearly so, religion from politics, and restored the independence of the temporal power. At the same moment that religion returned into the possession of believers, it quitted

the government of society;" and he proceeds to show how a parallel has run through the progressive developments and revolutions of civil society and those of religious society — "only," as he says, "religious society has always been foremost in this career."[1]

III. From this twofold emancipation, which must be ever regarded as the main contribution of Protestantism to human progress, there have sprung a few minor blessings which yet are of such great value that I must mention them, even though I cannot dwell upon them.

1. I put first among these *religious toleration*, which President Eliot has called "the best fruit of the last four centuries." To be sure, this has been slow enough in coming, even under the influence of Protestantism; but when would it ever have come without it? If we to-day, in our freer and kindlier atmosphere, deplore the controversy, dogmatism, and persecution which have afflicted the Protestant churches, let us remember that they had their source in the temper which Roman Catholicism engendered, prior to the Reformation, and that the spirit of

[1] History of Civilization, pp. 232, 233.

Protestantism has tended steadily to overcome all this mischief. It has not wrought alone, for modern science, general education, the press, and business have helped powerfully; but back of these and through them has been felt the force of the fundamental Protestant principle of Christian individualism, which constrains every man to recognize the rights of every other man, and makes for the widest liberty and toleration in "religious concernments."

> "Is true freedom but to break
> Fetters for our own dear sake,
> And, with leathern hearts, forget
> That we owe mankind a debt?
> No! true freedom is to share
> All the chains our brothers wear,
> And, with heart and hand, to be
> Earnest to make others free." [1]

2. I mention next the *spiritualization of religion.* Previous to the Reformation religion was a very formal, ceremonial, perfunctory thing; and the wonder almost is that the gospel of Jesus Christ survived at all in a church that possessed so little of his spirit as the Roman

[1] Lowell.

Church did in its worst estate. But when Protestantism withdrew the human soul from undue dependence upon the Hierarchy, and sent it to the Bible, and brought it face to face with the Master, it not only opened all the riches of the Scriptures and all the beauties of the one Matchless Life, to refresh and fructify the spirit of the believer, but it also stimulated that spiritual self-exertion without which no religious life can be deep, self-reliant, and strong. Thence resulted what has been called — sometimes too narrowly — the Evangelical type of Christianity, implying a vital, personal, spiritual faith and piety derived from the direct access of the individual soul to the great fountains of religious power, — the Bible, the Saviour, and the Spirit of God pervading the universe. This in turn has quickened Christian scholarship, Christian philanthropy, and Christian missionary effort; and the benefits which have thus accrued to the religion of the modern world are of incalculable value.

3. Growing naturally out of these salutary influences, and reinforcing them at every point, has come a positive help from the side of religion to the production of *strong characters.*

True, the Teutonic stock tends to yield such fruits anyhow; but it is plain that a religious doctrine that throws a man spiritually upon his own resources, showing him that his character, his salvation, his destiny depend, not upon priests and sacraments, but upon his own direct seeking of the divine life through personal repentance, prayer, and all holy endeavor, must aid immensely in building up strong men and women. We know what happens to a boy in school when he is taught to think for himself, and is started upon paths of independent research: all the best that is in him will come out. It is even so in moral and spiritual things: character is strengthened by the great principle of Christian individualism; and strong characters make a strong nation. Who shall say how much Protestantism has thus contributed to make the vast difference between America and Spain which we have recently seen so tragically exhibited?

4. Lastly, as another phase of the result just noted, I would speak of the power of *individual initiative.* This, too, may be a natural product of the Anglo-Saxon race; but whatever influences tend to stimulate self-reliance and self-

exertion, together with the alertness and the foresight which accompany these qualities, must tend likewise to develop a people who can think out new ways, invent things, start things, do things. How large a part this faculty or ability has played in American industry, we all have some idea; but perhaps it has not occurred to many of us that it has been fostered for four hundred years by that quickening spirit of Christian individualism which is the very soul of Protestantism. I am sure that our modern social development owes an enormous debt to this inventive trait, this power of initiative; and I am equally sure that it, in turn, owes much to that conception of religion which dignifies and strengthens the soul of every human being by teaching it the great lesson of spiritual independence.[1]

[1] Edward Everett Hale expressed a similar thought in his address at the World's Parliament of Religions, in 1893, when he said: "I do not believe that Americans of to-day sufficiently appreciate the strength which was given to this country when every man in it went about his own business and was told that he must 'paddle his own canoe,' that he must 'play the game alone,' that he must get the best, and that he must not trust to anybody about him to work out these miracles and mysteries."

Now, after seeing what benefits Protestantism has conferred upon the world, in these vital and fundamental ways, it is needful to glance at its shortcomings. It certainly has its shortcomings, its weaknesses, its unsolved problems, its grave dangers. I can barely allude to them, but I must at least indicate what they are.

The imperfections of Protestantism are quite apparent to one who takes a large and impartial view of Christianity. Its many divisions and subdivisions, resulting in waste, weakness, and inefficiency; its lack of uniformity in thought, worship, and government, resulting in confusion; its excess of the spirit of individualism, together with its dogmatic temper, resulting in controversy; its æsthetic poverty, resulting in the starvation of the imagination, and restricting its ministry to the more prosaic classes; and its want of the sense of historic continuity, depriving it of dignity and power, — all these limitations are patent to the candid student of religious phenomena and human progress, and are often keenly felt by the lovers of true spiritual culture.

In a general way, these defects arise out of the extremes to which the virtues of Protest-

antism have been pushed. Phillips Brooks once said that the difficulty with a great many good things was the difficulty of stopping them. We have seen that this has been the case in Roman Catholicism, — that its chief evils have sprung from the undue length to which it has carried the great principle of authority in religion. Likewise the chief evils of Protestantism have sprung from the undue length to which it has carried the very principles that give it its true strength.

(1) The Reformers found their source of authority for religious faith and doctrine to lie, not in the Church, but in the Bible; and it was a blessed day for our race when that fountain of life-giving waters was opened. Inestimable have been the ethical and spiritual benefits which it has yielded; and we can scarcely be grateful enough to Luther and his compeers for rendering the Scriptures into their native tongues, and for teaching the people to go to them for the light of divine truth. But see what happened. The theologians magnified the Bible beyond reason, and in the next century there grew up that hard, narrow conception of verbal inspiration and absolute infallibility which has been as false

and baneful, in its way, as the opposite notion of Papal infallibility. By this means cruel errors have been kept alive that otherwise would have died long ago, many souls have been repelled from Christianity altogether, and the spiritual progress of mankind has been seriously retarded. Now at length, happily, modern scholarship is breaking down that mechanical, erroneous conception of Scripture, and helping us to see that the God who spake of old time through the prophets and apostles speaks in our hearts, and has spoken in various other ways to His needy children; and we can say, with Lowell, —

"Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,
And not on paper leaves nor leaves of stone;
Each age, each kindred, adds a verse to it,
Texts of despair or hope, of joy or moan.
While swings the sea, while mists the mountain shroud,
While thunder's surges burst on cliffs of cloud,
Still at the prophets' feet the nations sit."

(2) Again, what I have called the principle of Christian individualism has been the main element of strength in Protestantism. Yet behold what mischief it has wrought when carried to excess! It has broken the Christian Church

up into a multitude of sects, that too frequently have fought one another instead of the common enemy, moral evil; and the immense number of small churches which we see around us to-day, involving a prodigious waste of money and human energy, and rendering the administration of Christian interests ineffective, is traceable largely to this abuse of individualism. In other words, the same thing has taken place in the religious world which has taken place in the business world, — competition has been carried too far. Hence weakness has ensued to such an extent that the principle is beginning to defeat itself by destroying the very churches, through their inability to survive, which it has striven so hard to multiply.

But there will be a reaction from this excessive individualism and denominationalism, and indeed it is already setting in, as a later chapter of this book will show. Meanwhile let us not forget that the great principle itself is true, and that the evils connected with it come only from the unwarrantable extremes to which it is pressed. So does God punish the sin of overdoing.

(3) Once more, it can hardly be denied that the reaction against the overwrought symbolism and ceremonialism of Roman Catholicism has carried the Protestant churches too far in the opposite direction. The result has been a degree of æsthetic barrenness almost grotesque. Beauty has been banished from the temples and the ceremonies of worship so far as well-nigh to rob them of half the joy that they ought to give in the holy name of religion. If beauty is one of the means by which the human spirit may be brought into communion with the Divine Spirit, this æsthetic poverty has involved a distinct spiritual loss to the race; and while the reaction was undoubtedly a wholesome one in the beginning, and has been redeemed generally by the deep sincerity which has accompanied it, yet the swing of the pendulum now in the other direction is prophetic of a broader, better-balanced type of Christian worship and Christian piety than has prevailed during the last three or four centuries. Man is a many-sided being, and the manifestations of God are various; and Christianity is large enough to minister to the human spirit on all

sides by opening the many different pathways through which the child of the Eternal may approach its Heavenly Father. It is for Protestantism to learn how to combine truth, virtue, reverence, beauty, and love, so fully and so justly as to serve all souls; and how to express these in its forms of worship so amply and so fairly as to satisfy the purest tastes and aspirations of all.

If now, in conclusion, we may glance at the dangers which confront Protestantism, at least two may be pointed out that seem both real and grave.

1. The first one is that we shall be so neglectful of our own personal religious life, and of the means of keeping it pure and strong, that all real Protestantism will die out of our souls, and thus die out of the world. Religion from the Protestant standpoint is primarily and essentially a personal, private, spiritual affair, — an affair between the individual human soul and its God. But if the individual neglects his spiritual interests, religion may lose its influence in his life, and degeneration may proceed to the point of utter helplessness; for we cannot ignore the

fact that there is such a terrible thing in this world as degeneration. What shall keep alive that high, resolute, and sincere desire of each man for spiritual harmony with God which alone can give reality and vitality to any outward forms of religion? Protestantism necessarily takes immense risks in trusting to the spirit of liberty and individualism. I believe it is safe to take such risks, for I believe they are precisely the risks which God takes; but we must recognize the fact that they *are* risks, and for this very reason involve the possibilities of frightful injury. Therefore we must seek to guard against ill results by providing, as far as possible, for a right use of the freedom which is God's best gift to the human soul. And if Protestantism shall not be duly mindful of this requirement, and press home upon every soul this solemn obligation to use its freedom aright and to "quench not the Spirit," the very genius of Protestantism will vanish from the religious world until another violent reaction brings it back to rectify another long chapter of error and abuse. There is no hope for Protestantism as a movement, with its institutions and its enter-

prises, except in the maintenance of the essentially Protestant spirit — the spirit of vital religiousness — in each heart; and one of its worst enemies, coming in the guise of a friend, is what I may call a kind of spiritual *laissez faire.*

2. The second danger is almost exactly contrary, namely, that we shall be swept off our feet by the wave of reaction toward socialism, centralization, and combination which is beginning to flood the civilization of our day, — making itself felt in the Christian Church in the easy love of ritualism and the ready yielding to the power of organization. And, curiously enough, this danger is aggravated by the other; for when the Protestant spirit has so died down in any man's heart that he does not care much about his own religious interests, — his faith, his piety, his worship, — he is a fit subject, when some crisis comes to show him his need of divine things, to be captivated by the positive teaching, influence, and institutionalism of the Roman Catholic Church, that never fails to press its claims or to pick up those who drift on the sea of life and are ready to accept her proffer of salvation. If,

therefore, through neglect, we come to have a weakened Protestantism, we may look for a strengthened Romanism; and when our thinking on industrial and political subjects is emphasizing the interests of socialism, in one form or another, making us see the value of organization and centralized authority, it is becoming easier for religious people to acquiesce in the pretensions of Roman Catholicism on the ground of its great utility. The only thing that can counteract this tendency or danger is a more intelligent, thoroughgoing appreciation of the nature and value of true Protestantism. No one can furnish this but the Protestant himself; and he must so understand his task as to see the inherent importance of his fundamental principles, and must so wisely exemplify them as to prove that they can be safely trusted to promote the highest spiritual welfare of the world.

Protestantism, in the last analysis, is but the religious phase of the same great movement of which democracy is the political phase. The whole development springs out of the aspira-

tions of mankind, and rests upon a profound faith in the capabilities of human nature. In order that this faith may be justified, it remains for the Protestant churches, as it remains for the democratic states, to continue to show that liberty does not preclude co-operation, but rather prepares the way for the best kind of co-operation; and that this best kind, namely, voluntary co-operation, can be more efficient for spiritual and social progress than any form of autocratic dominion. I believe that the peoples of the Teutonic stock will afford this demonstration, not only among themselves, but also among those alien races — so different and in some respects so inferior — to whom the events of the world are now bearing the message of our Western, Protestant, democratic civilization.

THE SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE OF MODERN EDUCATION.

THE SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE OF MODERN EDUCATION.

IN estimating the constructive forces of our present civilization, with special reference to the interests of religion, a large place — perhaps I should say the largest place — must be assigned to education. For no other factor under human control appears to me to be playing, and destined to play, so great a part in moulding thought, character, and social development. Its influence upon the individual is direct, vital, and permanent; and it modifies society by affecting the inner experience and the outer bearing of each of its constituent members whom it touches. Its reciprocal relation to religion, including ethics, is most intimate; and the twentieth century is quite certain to witness vaster results from their conjunctive operation than the world has dreamed of hitherto.

In amplifying and justifying this general statement, I ask the reader to consider first the new-

ness of our modern education, as regards alike its extent and its content; and, second, its influence upon religion, both as affecting the subject-matter of religious teaching, and as modifying the social function of the Christian Church.

I. Of course, in speaking of the newness of modern education, I do not mean to imply that education itself is a recent innovation. On the contrary, it is a very old affair. If one were writing its history, he would need to go back to ancient Egypt, Babylon, and Greece to tell of the beginnings of the acquisition and diffusion of knowledge. In Greece especially he would find material for an interesting story, and he might quote from such great thinkers as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle many a maxim and wise counsel for the guidance of educational thought to-day. The last-named writer, for instance, in alluding to the public interest in education, says: "No one, therefore, can doubt that the legislator ought principally to attend to the education of youth. For in cities where this is neglected, politics are injured. . . . But it is necessary that the studies of the public should be common. At the same time, also, no one ought to think that any citizen

belongs to him in particular, but that all the citizens belong to the city. The care and attention, however, which are paid to each of the parts naturally look to the care and attention of the whole."[1]

Here is essentially the conception which underlies the public school system of the United States at present, and it is almost identical with that which was recently expressed by Professor W. Rein, of Jena, regarding the function of the State in the education of the children of Germany.[2] Then our historian, coming down into the early Middle Age, might relate the efforts of such pioneer teachers as Cassiodorus and Baeda, Alcuin and Charlemagne, who, in their labors to spread the rudiments of learning among the children of the rising nations of Europe, laid the foundations of the universities of Italy, France, Germany, and England. And, again, later on, he might draw from the writings of Erasmus, Sir Thomas More, and others, clear and sound views as to what constitutes a true education; and so on he might go, tracing the love, the

[1] The Politics, Book 8.

[2] See "Education in the Nineteenth Century," p. 265.

growth, and the spread of learning, and the development of the means of promoting it even down to our own day.

But it is not the history of education that concerns us just now, but rather the vital significance of our present education; and in calling attention to its strictly modern character, I refer to its vast extent and its rich content.

1. The word that best describes the extent which I have in mind is the word *popular*. This indicates both the favorable regard in which education is held and its increasing prevalence among the masses. If any of the old worthies whom I have named were to look in upon our modern world and see the facilities for instruction now everywhere afforded, they would be astonished and gratified beyond measure. For of all the respects in which the present age differs from any former era none is really more striking than that which relates to popular culture. The increase in the world's stock of knowledge within the last two centuries is itself quite sufficient to be marvellous; but a corresponding increase has taken place in the means for its diffusion. Since the invention of printing,

all barriers seem to have been removed, so that whatever truth mankind possesses can have free course to run and be glorified; and countless institutions have been established for the purpose of training vast multitudes of the young to understand as much thereof as possible. If one should try to compute the value of the school property in existence, and the annual cost of operating it, he would find the sum-total enormous, and would discover that society is spending its money freely, even lavishly, upon the interests of education. In our own country, since the days of Horace Mann, the common school has overspread the land, academies and colleges have sprung up on every hand, and universities have risen like magic with endowments reaching into millions of dollars. Surely it is a remarkable and significant spectacle which we are witnessing in these outward phenomena of the intellectual life of modern times. Comparing it all with the state of affairs attendant upon the birth of the present European powers, we may say that the new republic growing up here in America is beginning its career under at least some auspicious circumstances.

The recentness of this extension of education may be indicated by a single fact. The City of Providence, Rhode Island, has lately celebrated (October 22–27, 1900) the one hundredth anniversary of its establishment of free public schools. When we consider how meagre were the advantages for general instruction, elsewhere as well as here, previous to the nineteenth century; how the thirteen original colonies, strung along the Atlantic seaboard, have become forty-five United States stretching westward to the Pacific; how each of these commonwealths has entered earnestly into the work of popular education; how the millions of Negroes in the South, who were slaves a generation ago, are participating to a considerable extent in the benefits of this great movement; how even the Indians, who are now the wards of the nation rather than its enemies, are being slowly civilized and provided with schools of various kinds; and how the spirit of this whole educational enterprise is spreading among the nations, notably in England, Germany, Japan, and now commencing in Cuba and the Philippines, — when we reflect upon all this, we are not only impressed with the newness of this

expansive feature of modern education, but we may be profoundly encouraged with the outlook for human progress.

2. The other aspect of this newness refers to the rapid and vast enlargement of knowledge, and to the scientific apprehension of the meaning of education.

(1) I cannot better depict the growth of knowledge in very recent times than by quoting a paragraph from one of Mr. John Fiske's little books,[1] published in 1885, in which he says:

"When we reflect that a fourth generation has barely had time to appear on the scene since Priestley discovered that there was such a thing as oxygen, we stand awe-struck before the stupendous pile of chemical science which has been reared in this brief interval. Our knowledge thus gained of the molecular and atomic structure of matter has been alone sufficient to remodel our conceptions of the universe from beginning to end. The case of molecular physics is equally striking. The theory of the conservation of energy and the discovery that light, heat, electricity, and magnetism are differently conditioned modes of undulatory motion, transformable

[1] The Idea of God, p. 46 *et seq.*

each into the other, are not yet fifty years old. In physical astronomy we remained until 1839 confined within the limits of the solar system, and even here the Newtonian theory had not won its crowning triumph in the discovery of the planet Neptune. To-day we not only measure the distances and movements of many stars, but by means of spectrum analysis are able to tell what they are made of. It is more than a century since the nebular hypothesis by which we explain the development of stellar systems was first propounded by Immanuel Kant, but it is only within thirty years that it has been generally adopted; and among the outward demonstrations of its essential soundness none is more remarkable than its surviving such an enlargement of our knowledge. Coming to the geologic study of the changes that have taken place on the earth's surface, it was in 1830 that Sir Charles Lyell published the book which first placed this study on a scientific basis. Cuvier's classification of past and present forms of animal life, which laid the foundations alike of comparative anatomy and of paleontology, came but little earlier. The cell-doctrine of Schleiden and Schwann, prior to which modern biology can hardly be said to have existed, dates from 1839; and it was only ten years before that that the scientific treatment of em-

bryology began with Von Baer. At the present moment (1885) twenty-six years have not elapsed since the epoch-making work of Darwin first announced to the world the discovery of natural selection."

Professor Fiske goes on to show how a corresponding progress, equally remarkable and equally modern, has taken place in other departments of thought and research than that of the physical sciences; and he concludes his review by saying that, "in their mental habits, in their methods of inquiry, and in the data at their command, the men of the present day who have fully kept pace with the scientific movement are separated from the men whose education ended in 1830 by an immeasurably wider gulf than has ever before divided one progressive generation of men from their predecessors."[1]

The venerable scholar, Professor Alfred Russell Wallace, is even more explicit and emphatic in setting forth a similar judgment, and he says "that to get any adequate comparison with the nineteenth century we must take, not any preceding century or group of centuries, but

[1] The Idea of God, p. 57.

rather the whole preceding epoch of human history."[1]

(2) But there is one more element in this new and rich content of modern education which we must notice, namely, the scientific interpretation of its meaning. The great doctrine of evolution, which "unifies all knowledge," as Professor John Bascom well points out, appears to be revolutionizing psychology and pedagogy. In accordance with this new conception of man's place in the organic world, there is growing up a new understanding of the development of the human mind, in its relations to the human body; of its workings at different periods of such development; of the special treatment which it requires, at each particular stage, at the hands of those who undertake to teach and train it; and of the whole object or purpose which education should seek to subserve. This new view is admirably presented by Professor Nicholas Murray Butler, in these words:

"The doctrine of evolution teaches us to look upon the world around us — our art, our science,

[1] The Wonderful Century, p. 156.

our literature, our institutions, and our religious life — as an integral part, indeed as the essential part, of our environment; and it teaches us to look upon education as the plastic period of adapting and adjusting our self-active organism to this vast series of hereditary acquisitions. . . . The child receives first, and in a short series of years, his animal inheritance; it then remains for us in the period of education to see to it that he comes into his human inheritance. . . . After the child comes into the enjoyment of his physical inheritance, he must be led by the family, the school, and the state into his intellectual or spiritual inheritance. The moment that fact is stated in those terms it becomes absolutely impossible for us ever again to identify education with mere instruction. . . . If education cannot be identified with mere instruction, what is it? What does the term mean? I answer, it must mean a gradual adjustment to the spiritual possessions of the race. Those possessions may be variously classified, but they certainly are at least five-fold. The child is entitled to his scientific inheritance, to his literary inheritance, to his æsthetic inheritance, to his institutional inheritance, and to his religious inheritance. Without them he cannot become a truly educated or a cultivated man. . . . That, it

seems to me, is the lesson of biology, of physiology, and of psychology, on the basis of the theory of evolution, regarding the meaning and the place of education in modern life."[1]

In the light of this statement we see that education to-day — whatever it may have been in the past — is not a process of groping in the dark, but rather a perfectly intelligent enterprise, in which the teacher knows what he is about when he takes a child by the hand and leads him up into an exceeding high mountain, whence he shows him all the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them by helping him to understand, as far as possible, the universe in which he lives, by enabling him to appropriate and enjoy his rightful share in its boundless wealth, and by equipping him perchance to penetrate somewhat the surrounding, infinite realms of the unknown.

Now, if the foregoing account of the character of modern education may be accepted as approximately correct, giving us a true hint of its scope

[1] The Meaning of Education, pp. 13, 14, 16, 17, 31. This whole work is to be highly commended.

and richness, we are prepared to ask what must be its spiritual influence.

II. The bearing of modern education upon spiritual interests may be viewed in three aspects, — as affecting the character of the people, as modifying religious belief and doctrine, and as helping to shape the work of religious institutions.

1. I scarcely need to take much time to point out the influence of education upon human character. It is too late in the day to doubt its beneficial effects. It enlightens, ennobles, and inspires the soul; it puts it in possession of itself, and enables it to master its surroundings; and it adds to the joy and sacredness of natural relationships an interest and a charm which give to life its highest zest. Thus it dignifies human nature, opens the universe to the contemplation of the mind, and yields for the heart untold treasures of beauty, virtue, and love. All this is doubtless trite enough, but I allude to it because I am attempting to estimate the power of this great, new factor in developing the spiritual side of civilization on a stupendous scale. Remembering what modern education is, or is

coming to be, in the broad sense in which I have spoken of it; remembering that millions are being, or are sure to be, reached by it, in place of hundreds in former times; and remembering that, on the whole, it is a potent means of uplifting humanity, as we know from our own personal experience and from the experience, now, of generations, we can begin to imagine what must be its beneficent influence in improving the human race, together with its conditions and fortunes, in the next hundred years.

To be sure, education does not as yet realize this high ideal to any such extent as we could wish, for it is still — taken as a whole — a very imperfect instrument. Much of our present education is one-sided, addressing itself too exclusively to the intellectual faculties, neglecting the ethical side of life, and very inadequately touching the religious side; while its methods have been too often narrow, inelastic, and at best tentative in their groping toward something better. But this better conception of the real nature and function of education is already dawning, as I have shown; and now one cannot but notice how much emphasis is laid upon the formation

of character in the pupil, the presentation of moral ideals, the development of moral qualities, — in short, the making of manhood. This will increase, and with its increase will vanish the existing dissatisfaction with the paucity of ethical and practical results in a good deal of the education of to-day. As people come more and more to understand how vital and comprehensive a thing education really is, they will be ready to say with Matthew Arnold "that middle-class education is a great democratic reform, of the truest, surest, safest kind. Christianity itself was such a reform. The kingdom of God, the grand object of Jesus Christ, the grand object of Christianity, is mankind raised, as a whole, into harmony with the true and abiding law of man's being, living as we were meant to live."[1]

A special feature of the influence of education upon popular character deserves attention on account of its relation to religion. The teachers of religion in the future will have intelligent people to deal with, — not savages, not barbarians, not illiterates. They will have to address

[1] Irish Essays, p. 376.

themselves, increasingly, to those who know something of science, history, and philosophy; who have been trained to think; and who are able to distinguish between truth and error, right and wrong, crude assumption and careful reasoning. They will be critical, they may be skeptical, and they certainly will not swallow frauds and falsehoods. Moreover educated people have many ways of feeding the spirit, and in themselves have the means of judging as to the validity of ethical appeals and the authority of divine truth. All this betokens a great advance in the spiritual development of the race, and affords a glimpse of the new fields in which religion must win its future triumphs.

2. The remark just made leads us to consider how modern education must affect religious faith and doctrine. Possibly some people wonder whether, ultimately, any such faith and doctrine will be left at all. But let us discriminate.

Of course it is plain that the growing intelligence of our time renders it increasingly difficult to retain in religious teaching the errors of past thought; and slowly but surely these errors, when clearly demonstrated, will be eliminated.

Already this process is going on, and really has proceeded farther than many are aware. Because both the clergy and the laity must share, to a greater or less extent, in the accumulating knowledge of the world, and must be more or less imbued with the critical spirit that necessarily accompanies it, they cannot consciously cling to views and expressions which they have entirely outgrown. Hence there is occurring, and must continue to occur, a precipitation of error in the stream of human thinking, — a gradual sinking into subordination of ideas or convictions that come to be questioned, and a final dropping out of sight altogether of those notions and tenets which are found to be no longer valid. This is precisely what has taken place in the history of science, and there is no reason why the same thing should not occur in the domain of religious faith and doctrine. In fact it is occurring, as every scholar knows, and nothing can stop it; the whole range of the subject matter of religious teaching must be tested and sifted as inexorably as every other department of learning.

But what does this mean? It means that religious thought must be purified. When error

is detected and rejected, truth is freed and preserved for the better apprehension of men; and that truth is all the stronger in its influence for having been subjected to the most searching scrutiny and proof. This is really what Historical and Biblical Criticism means, — a thorough re-examination and sifting of our Scriptures and our whole Christian inheritance. In other words, Knowledge is brought to the service of Faith both to remove false supports and to supply or reveal new ones. The result is that essentials are discovered and appreciated, non-essentials are repudiated or assigned to their proper rank, and our views of religion are enlarged, clarified, rectified, and verified. Therefore whatever remains in our heritage of religious faith and doctrine must be a far more precious and helpful possession than could possibly be the case without all this critical study. Who can measure the value of such a service to the spiritual interests of mankind?

Moreover, the truth thus threshed out of the harvests of the past is immediately sown in the wider fields which have opened for men's cultivation, and becomes the seed of a yet larger crop

of ideas. It is set in new relations by being adjusted to all the other truth that has come to be known, and so it is found to be not less but greater in its implications than was formerly supposed. This fact must not be overlooked. The reduction of much that has gone under the name of religion to a few simple, fundamental, spiritual truths may seem to some people to be a diminution of the scope and importance of religious interests; but it is rather a determination of universal principles which makes religion a vital, inherent, and permanent element in the ever-expanding life of the human soul.

To be sure, there is and will be, in this process of readjustment and progress, a good deal of disturbance, perplexity, and loss. A few will lose heart, some will lose faith, and some, alas! will lose their hold on God and virtue. But all this will be merely incidental and temporary. The race will soon right itself, and when the errors of past thought are stripped away, and the new visions of truth become clear, we shall have a purer, grander Christianity, with a nobler conception of humanity, than the world has ever known before.

3. Finally, the spiritual influence of modern education will increasingly show itself in helping to shape the work of religious institutions. Think what it must mean to have a host of enlightened, widely learned, well-trained men and women directing the practical activities of the Christian Church, — men and women who know history, who appreciate what is vital and essential in Christianity, who understand social conditions and needs, and who clearly see how this great institution should be made a mighty agency for the uplift of the race! For one thing, it will mean that religion in the services of the churches must be something more than mummery, — that they must be reverent, sincere, lighted with the light of truth, thoughtful, earnest, helpful. Thank God for any influence which may compel that! For another thing, when such people engage deeply in the work of our churches, we shall make our Sunday-schools, or whatever may take their place, tenfold more intelligent and efficient in their delicate, serious business of religious teaching than they are at present. Thank God, again, for even the remote prospect of that help! And when you consider what

might and should be the philanthropic and reformatory work of every church, you can see how valuable to society must be the guidance which educated minds can afford, — a guidance much needed now and too often withheld. In the coming days, I trust, it will not be withheld; for thoughtful people will see the enormous power and the profound worth of the Christian Church as an agency for human improvement, and will accord it the service which it needs at their hands. Then we shall behold the Christian Church taking higher ground and doing a wiser, stronger work for the practical redemption of mankind than has yet been the case.

Perhaps I am too optimistic in this confidence. I grant that there are some unpleasant facts, just now, which point the other way. For there appears to be a silent, wide-spread, and increasing alienation of the educated classes from the Christian churches. I think testimony to this effect might be elicited from many sources. The phenomenon may be accounted for, in part, by the intellectual inhospitality of some churches, — it may be their positive hostility to new truth, or their retention in their creeds and ceremonies

of ideas and expressions which intelligent men can no longer honestly accept, or their reluctance to change their methods of work in accordance with the altered intellectual and social environment of our time. But the fact that the fault does not lie altogether with such churches is evident from the further fact that the most liberal churches are not thronged, as a rule, with either the highly educated classes or with any other people. More likely, another cause exists in the augmented resources of cultivated minds for nourishing themselves, so that they do not feel the need of the church to such an extent as do others; and also in the manifold opportunities open to them for serving their fellow-men in vital and practical ways. Withal, it is probable that many educated persons would confess to no small degree of shameful neglect of their own religious interests, and an equally reprehensible dereliction of duty toward one of the most important institutions in society. However occasioned and however styled, — be it an alienation, a falling away, an indifference, an honest skepticism, or a positive antagonism, — the present attitude of large numbers of enlightened

people with reference to the Christian churches is a serious matter, not less for the churches than for such people themselves.

Yet I believe this attitude cannot be permanent. The spiritual impulses of the human soul can be depended upon to continue to assert themselves in some form of aspiration and consecration, because they are primal, instinctive, natural impulses. The intellectual apprehension of truth can never be a complete apprehension; the heart has its claims, and the heart will still cry out for the living God whenever it is sad or pensive or tempted or glad or filled with the spirit of holiness, — be it in the night of ignorance or in the daylight of the largest knowledge. Besides, the increase of learning will put learned men into the pulpits of the churches, and slowly but inevitably such men will make over the doctrines, ceremonies, and methods by which religion expresses itself, — so that it will become easier for educated people to feel at home and to labor therein. Again, as already intimated, such educated people cannot fail to perceive the great leverage which the churches have for the ethical and spiritual elevation of mankind, — for

the development of strong characters, for the moulding of public sentiment, for the promotion of good citizenship, for the service of all the higher interests of civilization; and, perceiving all this, they must join heartily in the noble ministry which these sacred institutions seek to render to society. Above all, the beautiful character and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth will continue to draw the admiration, reverence, and love of all classes of people, and silently mould the spirit of the world into fuller harmony with the Spirit of God. Therefore I cannot doubt that Christianity, which is itself so truly the spiritual light of the world, whose Founder was a Teacher, and who said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," will still win the allegiance of intelligent men and women, and that the reciprocal influence of the education which it is foremost in promoting will both confirm and extend its blessed principles of the divine life, and will help the mighty Institution which bears its heavenly message bear also its legitimate spirit and fulfil its legitimate mission in the world.

Sometimes, when I get discouraged with the

faultiness of our churches, — their backwardness, their inertia, their carelessness, — I comfort myself very greatly by counting on this help that will come, that must come, especially from the universities, which are the chief centres of light in our civilization. I see the vision of an approaching day when the power of knowledge, incarnated in educated men and women, shall come into these imperfect churches, and go to work in them, and gradually elevate their spirit, clarify their teachings, verify their essential faith, reinforce their devotion, and guide them into ways of truer usefulness and larger efficiency for the building up of the Kingdom of God. May the fair dream become a reality in Christian America early in the twentieth century!

THE PRESENT STAGE OF THEOLOGICAL PROGRESS.

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SEEING that religion is very deeply implicated in the civilization of our age, and is a factor of vital potency and permanency in the spiritual development of the race, we must be interested in every subject that is directly connected with it. Among many such none is more closely involved in its influence than theology; and although we frequently hear it said that this branch of learning is bearing little fruit in the present practical era, thereby intimating that it is beginning to wither and will be soon cut off and cast into the fire, a profounder judgment will regard the opinion as superficial. For let us consider a moment what theology really is, how inevitable it is, and what is its legitimate function in human life; then we shall be prepared to appreciate the true significance of the theological movement of our time, with its marvellous promise of ultimate blessing to the world.

Theology may be simply defined as the exercise of thought on religious things; or, more fully, as the intellectual apprehension of divine truth; or, with still greater precision, as the formulated results of such apprehension in the classified knowledge which constitutes a science. The instant we accept a definition like this, or equivalent to it, we perceive that theology is as inevitable as intelligence. For we have seen that religion, in its nature, as far as we can determine, is an instinctive impulse, sentiment, aspiration, or tendency in the soul of every human being; and that it appears thus to be a spiritual force which binds each such soul to the Soul of the universe, even as the material force that we call gravity binds a planet to its central sun. But if we recognize religion in this way as a living reality in human experience, however originating, and whatever implying beyond the range of its immediate activity, we are compelled to *think* about it; and what we think about it becomes our theology. Just as we do and must think about love, and the moral impulse, and the æsthetic sense, and every other phenomenon of the soul; so we do and must think about the

religious sentiment and all that it means. That is to say, whatever goes on in the mind and heart of man arrests the attention of the cognitive and reasoning faculties; indeed, cognition and reason themselves become thus the objects of cognition and reason simply because man is the one peerless creature on earth who can know himself. And because what occurs within himself seems to him to be related, however mysteriously, to what occurs in the great universe outside of himself, it follows that what he thinks of his own inner experiences, that is, his religion, he necessarily tries to co-ordinate with his thought about the strange Power other than himself that appears to fill the worlds and the ages. Somehow he comes to feel or believe or imagine that this Power, ruling in heaven and on earth, is concerned with his personal existence; and so his theology comes to be commensurate with his religion, — not only linking his own spiritual life with the Supreme Life of the universe, but expanding his *thought* about that inmost life of his soul to the dimensions of his largest conception of the Supreme Thought that lies back of all things and that he calls divine. Thus theology

becomes philosophy, — a theory of religion, and an explanation of the Absolute; and it is inevitable because man has experiences of the soul which he cannot help thinking about, and dwells in a universe which he cannot help studying.

Arising in some such way, theology naturally has great power in human life. Not only is it necessarily true that what a man thinks about his own deepest experiences reacts in a measure upon those experiences and helps to shape their development, but it is equally true that what he thinks about the Supreme Power of the universe in relation to himself affects profoundly his conduct and character. Just as your political attitude is largely determined by your comprehensive theory of human government, when you follow the dictates of enlightened reason and are free to act, so is your religious attitude chiefly determined by your sincere conception of the nature and purpose of the Divine Government. If you really believe that the Deity is jealous, vengeful, capricious, you will do what you can to placate His anger and please His fancy; and according to what you think He requires at your hand will you regulate your worship and behavior. On

the contrary, if you conceive that the Deity is eternally equable, just, and loving, you will honor, trust, and love Him in return, provided you are in earnest; and, believing that He wants you to treat your fellow-men as He treats you and all, you will be moved to try to imitate Him in spirit and action. If, like the Brahman, you consider the Supreme Being forever impassive and immutable, you will yearn to have your soul absorbed in a heaven of endless inactivity, too idle even to dream; while if, like the Pauline Christian, you think of God as eternally active and creative, and of yourself as His beloved child and fellow-worker, you will want to get up and go to the ends of the earth to carry out His holy will. So it happens, through the delicate interplay of all the thoughts, feelings, and efforts of the soul, that a man becomes, or tends to become, like the Deity he worships. Hence theology, by giving direction to the operation of the religious sentiment, lays a strong, moulding hand upon conduct, character, and the course of civilization. I might cite the history of religion throughout the world in proof of this, but I scarcely need to say more. Foolish as religion seems to some

minds, and vain as they deem theology, it is none the less a fact that both religion and theology have played an immense part in the life of all nations; and it appears entirely probable that they will continue to do this, in one way or another, until man becomes something other than man.

Now, if it is plain that theology is simply the exercise of thought upon religious things, and is both inevitable and influential, we must see at once that progress in theology becomes possible, certain, and more or less continuous. For thought is affected by knowledge, and knowledge grows from age to age. Every kind of knowledge modifies every other kind. Hence theology cannot escape the influence of learning in general. And since general learning must go on increasing, because man is in an infinite universe, which he cannot help studying; and since each generation must leave its acquisitions, in large part, to the next, for assimilation and further augmentation, it follows that all knowledge must undergo a perpetual process of revision and amplification; and therefore all religious thought, that is, all theology, must be subject to progressive modifi-

cation. Herein lies the folly of that notion of finality which has done so much mischief in the promulgation of religious doctrine, and which reaches its climax in the enunciation of the Roman Catholic decree of papal infallibility.

By these remarks I do not mean to imply that there is no such thing as determining divine truth, and that we ought not to be as definite and exact as possible in stating what we conceive that truth to be; but I do mean that we must remember the infiniteness of the realm we are exploring, and our own finiteness, and must hold all our conclusions forever open to re-examination. No book of God is closed and sealed, and He has not fully revealed Himself to any of His children, because no one of His children is capable of receiving such a complete revelation — any more than your baby can receive a perfect disclosure of all your mature thoughts, feelings, and intentions. The universe is boundless, God is infinite, we must leave room for mystery and growth, and we should be thankful for even the few broken rays of divine truth which stream into our lives to illuminate them with the light of holiness. Therefore not only do I argue that

progress in theology is inevitable, so that we cannot dam up the stream if we would; but I plead for the free, reverent, joyful recognition of this fact, and for the amplest provision for such progress, on the part of every religious organization in the world.

And now we are ready to try to estimate the present stage of theological progress.

Do I seem presumptuous in attempting such a task? I grant that one would need ten times the learning I possess in order to perform it thoroughly and with detailed qualifications of statement. But my purpose is not to endeavor to exhaust the subject, but merely to draw as best I can the outlines of the great theological movement of our age, as I see and feel it. Of course my views are limited by the range of my own vision, and colored by the hue of my own temperament and experience; but this is true of every student of spiritual phenomena; and if I tell what I think I see, the reader can make allowance for the personal element in my observations, and can confirm or correct my reflections by looking and judging for himself — which is what I chiefly desire.

Let me begin with the general remark that the vast increase of knowledge during the nineteenth century, alluded to in the previous chapter, has begun to modify theology by supplying it with new data. This is what has brought about the unsettled conditions of religious thought in the midst of which we now find ourselves. New knowledge always disturbs old systems. Horse cars and gas lights served the city well enough until somebody learned to utilize electricity. A shrewd business man, speaking of the trusts, said to me, "A trust would be all right if you could prevent the formation of new companies." So a system of theology, once logically constructed, would be all right if you could keep people from discovering new ideas. But new ideas are waiting to be discovered, and thousands of alert minds are diligently searching for them; and when a single great idea is brought to light, such as Copernicus or Columbus or Bacon or Newton or Darwin wrought out, it immediately begins to upset previous calculations and to fructify the world for new harvests.

This, then, is the grand characteristic of the present stage of theological development, — its

unsettled state, due to the new data which modern learning, recently and enormously augmented, has furnished it. In the words of Professor William Newton Clarke, "information, in inconceivably vast amount, is being thrown upon the thought of the time, to be handled and assimilated. Thought is passing over from the old non-scientific methods to the more nearly scientific movement that modern study has developed. Facts are scrutinized with new zeal, and truth is tested in new ways. Inquiry knows no bounds. Antiquity and prescription count for nothing. We desire to know the very thing that is, and our certainties are differently grounded from those that our fathers held. Vast social problems arise, in which we are compelled to find out whether we are living together as we ought, and what we owe to one another. All fields of thought are transformed, and all modes and significances of life are altered, in this great time of change. Every period is a period of transition, but there has never been one like this." [1]

Let me now proceed to specify and slightly

[1] What Shall We Think of Christianity? p. 35.

unfold some of the main particulars comprised in this general statement.

1. As just hinted, probably the strongest influence that is modifying the theology of our day is the scientific spirit. By the scientific spirit I mean an accumulated fund of knowledge, a method of inquiry, and a habit of mind — which I hardly need explain. As a result of the researches of the physical scientists, — the astronomers, the geologists, the chemists, and the biologists, — I suppose one may justly say that the universe is to us a thousand times larger, a thousand times older, a thousand times more complex, and a thousand times more pregnant with life than the men of a century ago dreamed of its being. What wonder that all this has thrown new light upon the problems of theology? It has compelled their re-examination in all their bearings, and it is likely that the doctrine of evolution alone will soon or late lead to radical restatements of religious truth. The first-fruits of this great doctrine have been gathered by the physicians and the school-teachers, but the preachers of religion will come in for their share by and by. For, far from

undermining their position, or invalidating religion as a factor in human life — as some have hastily surmised — this profound and sweeping generalization of science has but laid new foundations, more deeply than others, for the spiritual temple of human faith, hope, and love. To those who question this judgment I commend the reading of Professor John Bascom's little book entitled "Religion and Evolution," published in 1897. He did not, indeed, give me the opinion just expressed, but he strongly confirms it. And I do truly think that, when we shall have got beyond the period of disturbance and doubt through which we are now passing, we shall see that modern science, and the theory of evolution in particular, instead of having cut religion out of the human soul and God out of the universe, have given us a firmer and more vital apprehension of both.

Then the scientific spirit has changed the working procedure of the theologians. It has taught them the scientific method, — the method of observation, inference, and verification, — the so-called inductive method, which has yielded the world about all the scientific knowledge of

any value that it possesses. By this method the theologians of every school are slowly learning how to gather facts, how to handle them, what comparison is worth, and how to wait until they have thus observed widely and carefully before drawing their conclusions; and even then they do not forget to test and verify those conclusions over and over. The value of this procedure is very great: it substantiates the truth; it enables each generation to conquer and vitalize its inheritance; and it insures continual progress.

Again, the scientific spirit has changed the temper of the theologians. Most people are aware how dogmatic, intolerant, controversial it used to be. Now it is broad, hospitable, humble. Many persons suppose that, because dogmatism has thus waned, popular interest in theology has declined. Undoubtedly there is a measure of truth in such a supposition. Nevertheless thoughtful men are still interested in the great, fundamental problems of theology; only they approach and treat them in a different frame of mind, with a wider outlook upon other fields of learning; and they think that the theologians do not know it all, and the theologians are

beginning to think so, too. This reverent open-mindedness is one of the most salutary attitudes which Christian people can be taught to assume, not less for its spiritual than for its intellectual advantages. In due time its influence in the churches will broaden, deepen, and ennoble their worship and their piety as well as their thought, while it will redeem "the queen of sciences" from that arbitrary spirit which has too often characterized her pronouncements.

2. The next great influence that is modifying theology to-day comes from historical and Biblical criticism. The scientific spirit or method applied to a new study of history and the Scriptures has given us a new conception of God's revelation of Himself. The Bible is no longer to be read as a verbally inspired and wholly infallible Book, all alike from beginning to end, and containing an exact disclosure of the Divine Mind; but rather as a great literature, produced by a profoundly religious people who learned in their national and private experiences the most vital lessons about God's providence, and whose passionate ethical faith has become the inspiration of the world. And history has

come to be viewed, in its religious aspects, as another "great book of God," as Archdeacon Farrar has truly called it; and the ideas and institutions of the past, as well as those of the present, are now judged in the light of their origin, and are seen to fall into their legitimate place in the vast process of development that runs through the ages.

As a result of this critical work, we now have a clearer, more vivid, and more accurate understanding of all the substantial facts in the history and beliefs of the Israelitish people, of the life and times of Jesus, of the conditions and circumstances attendant upon the birth of the Christian Church, and of its status and work in every era since, than students in any other age have been able to gain. Therefore our theology is being marvellously enriched and reassured, as well as clarified and rectified; and it may easily turn out that the contribution of historical and Biblical criticism to spiritual faith will be even greater than the service rendered by the physical sciences.

Of course the benefits accruing from this new branch of learning have not yet reached the

masses of people, even in the churches; and doubtless the fruits thus far produced have seemed to minds fixed in traditional views mainly evil, being apparently so largely disturbing, negative, and destructive. But the work of clearing the ground of old growths is always necessary to new harvests. The reformer is usually at first an iconoclast. But in due time the positive, constructive stage of this great movement will be reached, — indeed, it has been fully reached already for many scholars; and the better conceptions will begin erelong to impregnate the popular mind with those vital seed-truths which will ultimately bring forth among Christians generally a more natural and spiritual faith in the operations of the Divine Spirit in our human world.

3. Another characteristic of present theology is its wider outlook upon the world. Several causes have conspired to produce this. Among them may be prominently mentioned these: travel and commerce, opening up the nations; the work of Christian missions, broadening our religious sympathy as well as our human interest; and the comparative study of the various reli-

gions of mankind, teaching us a truer view of the nature of religion, a higher estimate of man's spiritual capacity, and a more just conception of the real rank and value of Christianity. Consequently we do not speak of the primitive or savage or inferior peoples of the various lands as "heathen" in the sense in which our grandfathers did; and another, higher, deeper, more enduring motive than that of saving them from endless punishment is beginning to inspire the work of carrying the gospel to them. Thus the reactionary influence of foreign missions has purified the spiritual life of the home churches; while the researches of such great students of religion as the late Professor Max Müller have taught us that

> "God sends His messengers to every age,
> To every clime and race of men,
> With revelations fitted to their growth
> And shape of mind; nor gives the realm
> Of truth into the selfish charge
> Of one sole race." [1]

4. Still another mark of the theology of our time is its strong social bent. The rise of the social interest is one of the striking phenomena of the closing quarter of the nineteenth century.

[1] Lowell.

Every intelligent person shares this interest to some extent. It is not strange therefore that theology, now broadened and mollified, should feel a deep sympathy with this very significant movement. For it is really an inspiration of humanity, and humanity is God's chief care, at least in the estimation of the theologian. Christianity exists expressly for the redemption of mankind; hence the Christian thinker cannot but be keenly concerned in everything that pertains to man's real welfare. Therefore he seeks to understand the Divine will respecting human relationships; and, on the other hand, he looks to find in the natural laws governing such relationships a clear indication of that will. For if this is God's world, and man is God's child, and the laws of nature are simply God's methods, we shall learn what He requires of us in our dealings with one another by a truer comprehension of the structure of human society. Accordingly the theologian in these days feels that he needs to learn of the sociologist, while his heart impels him to engage in every good work of social betterment. So I think we may expect to see theology, for the next twenty-five years, largely

dominated by what I have called the social interest, — which will mean that those aspects of religious thought will be most prominent which emphasize the Divine will concerning man's duty to his fellow-men.

Obviously one effect of this must be to make religious teaching and work more immediately practical. Preaching will be less speculative and abstruse, more vital and concrete. Not so much attention will be given to affairs in the next world, but more will be given to the actual affairs of this world. Men will be prepared to die by being fitted to live. They will strive less to get ready for heaven, and more to establish the kingdom of heaven on earth. They will see that they have their part to do in this great and holy task because they are laborers together with God by virtue of the fact that they are His children. Thus the sense of moral responsibility will be deepened, and discipleship to Jesus Christ will mean co-operation in the complete redemption of the world from all manner of evil. So will the scope of Christianity's mission be vastly enlarged, varied, and intensified; and, far from being reduced to the ministry of

altruism untouched by the thought of God, it will rather rest back entirely upon the great, central truth in the teaching of Jesus, namely, the Divine Fatherhood, legitimizing and requiring human brotherhood, including all true sympathy and wise helpfulness.

5. The next characteristic of present theology which I will mention is its truer ranking of Jesus Christ. In the past there has been an unnatural, overstrained conception of Christ, which has made him seem remote and unreal. But now, through a clearer and more accurate understanding of his historical personality, he is becoming far more near, real, and dear to every enlightened Christian. In place of the mythological Christ, the philosophical Christ, the ecclesiastical Christ, and the dogmatic Christ, who has occupied the thought of the centuries gone, there is coming to be a warm, loving, human Christ. People in all the churches are beginning to think of him, not as God, but rather as "a Teacher sent from God," — a blessed, beautiful, majestic Teacher, come to be the spiritual Light of the world, the Lover and Redeemer of men. In this, the people are not

drifting away from Jesus of Nazareth, but are drawing nearer to him, and taking him into their personal affections more naturally and more helpfully than ever before. They are less interested in discussing the question of his divinity — at any rate in the old sense — but they identify him more closely with humanity, or identify humanity more closely with him. And this identification is not so much speculative or philosophical as it is ethical and practical; that is to say, it is increasingly felt that Jesus Christ is the great, true Example for man, in moral conduct and in religious faith; and so those are considered most really his followers who strive most earnestly to walk "in his steps." [1]

This gratifying fact, that we are coming to a truer appreciation of Jesus Christ, and are letting him have his natural influence over our thinking and our conduct, is one of the highest and most salutary means of purifying Christian theology, as it is the surest means of blessing his disciples and the whole world. Henceforward his place is more secure in human thought and love than

[1] See Whittier's poem "Our Master" for an admirable expression of this natural, spiritual, practical view.

ever before, and men will turn to him increasingly as the one Great Teacher for all classes, all races, all times.[1] The more the habiliments of myth and legend are stripped away, the more clearly does he stand revealed as the Commanding Figure of history, the Spiritual Leader of mankind, the Saviour of the world; and I think Christians of every denomination can echo these sentiments of Richard Watson Gilder: —

> "Behold Him now where He comes!
> Not the Christ of our subtle creeds,
> But the light of our hearts, of our homes,
> Of our hopes, our prayers, our needs;
> The brother of want and blame,
> The lover of women and men,
> With a love that puts to shame
> All passions of mortal ken.
> . . . . . .
> Ah no, thou life of the heart,
> Never shalt thou depart!
> Not till the leaven of God
> Shall lighten each human clod;
> Not till the world shall climb
> To thy height serene, sublime,
> Shall the Christ who enters our door
> Pass to return no more."[2]

[1] Since this chapter was written, Prof. F. G. Peabody's "Jesus Christ and the Social Question" aptly illustrates this.

[2] Quoted by Henry Van Dyke in "The Gospel for an Age of Doubt," p. 124.

6. Another distinguishing trait of theology at present, which must not be overlooked, is a nobler estimate of man. In the past human nature has been excessively depreciated. It is easy to see how it came about when one is familiar with the peculiar antecedents, experiences, and influence of St. Augustine, who is chiefly responsible for the doctrine of total depravity in the Christian Church of the last fifteen centuries. But happily, at length, after Calvin's reinforcement of this dogma has had its day, an effectual reaction has set in to so great an extent as to begin to right up the thinking of the majority of religious teachers respecting man's place in the scale of being. It was one of the conspicuous services of Channing to the purification of modern Christian thought that he used his fine abilities to correct the hoary error; but many other influences have helped to produce the good result. Accordingly, as will be shown in a subsequent chapter,[1] one of the finest developments of our age has been a growing appreciation of human worth, which in turn reinforces our faith in God. For it is now quite plain that

[1] See chap. ix.

our highest reasons for believing in God lie within the spiritual realm which is experimentally known to us in human life. It is because we know man to be a spiritual being — intelligent, loving, virtuous, free — that we are led to postulate a Source that is at least not less than the utmost of all this, — a Fountain of life whence flow all lesser lives, — an Eternal Goodness whence springs every other form of goodness. Therefore if we depreciate man we annihilate God; while the more highly we estimate man, the loftier will be our conception of the Divine Paternity. Of course the thing for us to do, regardless of consequences, is to keep close to the *facts* of human nature; but it is just because we are learning to let the facts speak for themselves, and these facts testify to something good and great in humanity, that our faith in the spiritual constitution of the universe and in the Beneficent Power that is the Soul of it is slowly but steadily rising. The creature that has climbed, through whatever long ages and by whatever devious ways, out of animalism into some "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" speaks to us more cogently than all other

phenomena of the Creator who has made such an achievement possible by breathing a spiritual life into the world of matter. And so it comes about that a better thought of man assures a larger faith in God, and the evolution which we can trace becomes the most trustworthy indication of that realm of progressive development which lies beyond our present ken.

This noble estimate of man does not blind us to the human frailty and depravity which do actually exist. It is no poetic dream that we cherish. Our race is not a race of angels. Beastliness, grossness, ignorance, wickedness, in all their hideous proportions, are not less but rather more clearly recognized in the light of evolution than under former theories. But they are more truly understood, are seen to be incidental, and are therefore shown to be vulnerable and temporary. They can be overcome, outgrown, transcended; and our business is to be helpers of God, as far as our power can reach, in the mighty process of accomplishing such a result. Hence we are not lulled to sleep by a doctrine of moral *laissez faire*, but are rather stimulated to the sublimest of struggles. Each of us has an individu-

ality of his own to develop, strengthen, and perpetuate; each of us can lend a little aid to his fellow-men; and each of us is called of God to enlist in the great conflict until the spiritual victory is won for "the whole family in heaven and on earth." Surely a theology that thus emphasizes the inherent dignity and the priceless value of the human soul, and yet recognizes its imperfection and the terrific struggle that its development involves, while postulating a Divine Order that is "over all and through all and in all," must inspire every man with a sense of personal responsibility and an undaunted courage.

7. The last noteworthy feature of the present stage of theological progress that I can mention is the enthronement of love. Theology naturally directs attention mainly to God, and the influence of the ideas that are entertained concerning Him flows downward through all other aspects of religious thought. It is perhaps the crowning excellence of our Christian faith in these days that we are able to say, and to mean it when we say, that "God is love." After ages of attributing to Him malice or caprice or impo-

tence, of considering Him remote or implacable or austere, we are now believing most intelligently and joyfully that He is none other than "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," — his Father and our Father, his God and our God.[1] As such He cannot be inferior in character to the world's Redeemer, but on the contrary must transcend him; for Jesus himself said, "My Father is greater than I." But to think of God as at least Christ-like is necessarily to conceive of Him as good, benevolent, affectionate, beneficent. Accordingly it is not too much to say that the gospel of this age, increasingly preached in all the churches, is the gospel of Divine Love unfathomable and eternal. Indeed, the only alternative to this glorious message is bald materialism and downright atheism — it is either a God of love or no God at all.

But let it be noted that this conception does not emasculate the Divine Character. It does not rob God of His righteousness and make Him a fond, indulgent, but weak Deity. The element of justice is essential to true love. Jesus taught men to reason from human fatherhood to the

[1] John xx. 17.

Divine Fatherhood when he said, "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"[1] In so doing he appealed to the sense of justice in men as well as to the sentiment of affection; and every thoughtful man knows that that is no true and worthy human love that is not thoroughly righteous; hence it is impossible to have any adequate notion of God's love without a duly correlative notion of His righteousness. This necessarily means that He is the Infinite Opponent of all unrighteousness, which in turn means that He must rid the universe of it. Therefore every man must understand that God Almighty sets His face against iniquity, and calls upon all wrong-doers to turn from the evil of their ways; that punishments are administered to this end, and accordingly need to be severe; and that all the resources of Divine Providence are pledged to the gracious work of redeeming mankind from sin, whereof the highest type is seen in the life and gospel of Jesus Christ.

[1] Luke xi. 13.

Moreover it is to be recognized that, because "God is love," the supreme law of the spiritual life is love. He who lives most fully in love is most truly in harmony with God. "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."[1] The surest way of knowing God, of feeling and finding Him in the various experiences of life, is to live continually in the spirit of Christ-like love. Love is more important than logic or knowledge as a means of faith. The world has scarcely begun to learn this simple but profound lesson. The world's life has been largely founded in fear, selfishness, and strife. It has yet to be established and conducted in confidence, love, and peace. In proportion as this nobler type of theology, enthroning love, makes itself felt will men come to see that those who "walk in love, as Christ also loved us, and gave himself for us," are walking with God, working by God's method, and helping to build up the kingdom of God. In this beautiful and blessed teaching lies the hope of the world.

[1] 1 John iv. 12.

As I thus sketch the great movement of religious thought flowing through our Christian civilization to-day, I perceive anew that theology is at length beginning really to free itself from the dominance of Latin Christianity, which has furnished our Western mind with its ruling conceptions for fifteen hundred years; and I rejoice to believe that we stand at the dawn of an era which will surely work out a new, higher, more helpful system of spiritual philosophy than has been dreamed of hitherto, except in the holy gospel of the Son of Man.

THE PLACE OF CHRISTIANITY AMONG THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS, AND THE MEANING OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

THE PLACE OF CHRISTIANITY AMONG THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS, AND THE MEANING OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

THE previous chapter called attention to the fact that one of the characteristics of religious thought at present is its wider outlook upon the world, due to various causes. The present chapter may properly commence at this point, and it may be well approached by way of the general remark that our whole modern civilization, for the last five hundred years, can be fairly described as an expansive movement. Ever since the age of the Renaissance the Western mind has extended its activity in all directions. Beginning with the Greek and Roman classics, and the art, philosophy, and state-craft lying behind them, it has sought to conquer every realm that it could touch. Especially since Columbus and Magellan demonstrated the rotundity of the earth, it has sent its ships into every quarter of the globe, and wherever its restless energies could exert them-

selves it has pushed on in its work of exploration, investigation, invention, commerce, conquest, and colonization. At length the whole world lies open before it, and the cosmopolitan spirit is influencing its views of all human interests.

Resulting from this expansion, there has been a growing knowledge of mankind, which is now wonderfully large and varied. Travellers and traders going everywhere have come into contact with all sorts and conditions of people, and these "sorts" have turned out to be far more numerous and strange than the men of a few centuries ago could conceive to be possible, while the "conditions" disclosed have ranged from those of the wild human brute, standing just on the edge of the animal kingdom, up through savagery and all stages of barbarism to the highest types of spiritual civilization. Scholars have patiently gathered the facts pertaining to the different tribes and races thus discovered, and from their fruitful study there have been developed several most instructive sciences. One of these is ethnology, or the classified knowledge of the manifold divisions of the human family in their likenesses and dissimilarities; another is philology, or the

interpretation of the various languages and literatures of the world; while still another is the comparative study of religions, or the description and explanation of the numerous cults, beliefs, rites, doctrines, and organizations which make up the religious phenomena of mankind. Together these great sciences give us an intelligent understanding of human nature and human history such as never existed before, and the gist of which may be comprehended in a brief time by any earnest student who reads the book of life by the wondrous lamp of learning.

In particular the comparative study of religions, working hand in hand with ethnology, has fully established the remarkable fact that religion is a universal as well as a powerful factor in human life. From the most primitive man to the most cultivated there is a manifestation of the religious instinct in some way. Says Dr. Daniel G. Brinton — as high an authority on this subject, I suppose, as America has produced: "The fact is that there has not been a single tribe, no matter how rude, known in history or visited by travellers, which has been shown to be destitute of religion, under some form. The con-

trary of this has been asserted by various modern writers of weight, for example by Herbert Spencer and Sir John Lubbock, not from their own observation, for neither ever saw a savage tribe, but from the reports of travellers and missionaries. I speak advisedly when I say that every assertion to this effect when tested by careful examination has proved erroneous." He proceeds to show how the mistaken judgment has occurred, and then concludes by saying, "Religion, therefore, is and has been, so far as history informs us, universal in the human race." And prior to these remarks he has this paragraph: "The religiosity of man is a part of his psychical being. In the nature and laws of the human mind, in its intellect, sympathies, emotions, and passions, lie the well-springs of all religions, modern or ancient, Christian or heathen. To these we must refer, by these we must explain, whatever errors, falsehoods, bigotry, or cruelty have stained man's creeds and cults; to them we must credit whatever truth, beauty, piety, and love have hallowed and glorified his long search for the perfect and the eternal."[1]

[1] Religions of Primitive Peoples, chap. i., 1898.

I am glad to quote such emphatic words from so distinguished a scholar because they entirely confirm my own long-cherished and profound conviction to the same purport, namely, that man is *naturally* a religious being, just as truly as he is a rational or an affectionate being. This is the bed-rock upon which I rest all my own work as a Christian minister, and I believe it should be likewise fundamental in every phase of religious evangelism, entreaty, and appeal. Yet how different has been the ruling conception of Latin Christianity for fifteen hundred years! Man a fallen and ruined creature, naturally perverse, alienated from the life of God, and incapable of approaching Him without help from on high, — such has been the basis of all the theology, the exhortation, the revivalism, and the missionary effort of Western Christendom, with only a few notable exceptions, during this long period. But now, happily, these scientific disclosures are laying a new and far more solid foundation for all religious propaganda or culture by demonstrating beyond peradventure the universality, naturalness, and indestructibleness of man's religious endowment. This means that

henceforth the enlightened teacher of religion will trust the native religious capacity of the human soul as implicitly as the educator trusts its intellectual capacity. Religion is not something to be created in the life of men, but something to be developed, cultivated, perfected. Even Jesus Christ does not *impart* spiritual life, or the moral sense, or the thirst for God *de novo;* he merely quickens, arouses, reinforces, and upbuilds all this. Man does not have to be made over, literally and completely, in order to become the child of God; he is the child of God already, and has simply to be taught of his Father, made aware of his lineage and his birthright, lifted out of the mire of ignorance and sin, and helped to attain the spirituality of life and character which is the Divinely appointed goal of his being. And because he is forever God's child, though often wayward and wicked, we can say, in all truth and soberness and joy, that he cannot rid himself of his nature as such, though he may frightfully abuse and injure himself; and that he cannot get away from the reach of the Divine Spirit, although he may so imbrute himself as to be practically un-

aware that the Almighty Hand still has hold of him.

"Man cannot be God's outlaw if he would,
Nor so abscond him in the caves of sense
But Nature still shall search some crevice out
With messages of splendor from that Source
Which, dive he, soar he, baffles still and lures." [1]

Now, standing upon this broad ground, in the clear light of knowledge, recognizing the fact that all men, in all stages of culture, are religious beings by nature, and expecting to find a great variety of manifestations of the religious spirit, we may attempt a fair examination and comparison of the leading religious systems of the world. This important task has been performed by scholars who have made the subject a special study, and the results of their researches are available for our instruction. Accordingly, as the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, in 1893, invited the representatives of the principal extant faiths of mankind to come and speak their respective messages to the listening nations, so each of us can have his own little parliament of religions by sitting down to read the thrilling

[1] Lowell.

tale which these scholars tell us about the spiritual aspirations of the human race, not only at present, but also in past ages. For the magic wand of learning summons from the dead the ancient Egyptian, Babylonian, Greek, and Roman — yea, even the men of prehistoric times — and bids them speak to us out of their recovered literatures, monuments, utensils, and charms. Thus there is presented to the intelligent imagination a panorama of the world's religious evolution as impressive and inspiring as any development that the biologist or the sociologist can portray. As Professor Allan Menzies well says, "the study of the religions of the world is the study of the very soul of its history; it is the study of the desires and aspirations which throughout the course of history men have not been ashamed, nay, which they have been proud and determined, to confess. No more fascinating study could possibly engage us."[1] He also truly remarks that "the religious beliefs and practices of mankind are not a mere chaos, not a mere incessant outburst of unreason, consistent only in that it has appeared in every age and every country of the world; but that

[1] History of Religion, 1895, p. 14.

they form a cosmos, and may be known, if we take the right way, as a part of human life from which reason has never been absent, and in which a growing purpose has fulfilled and still fulfils itself. The foremost writers on the science of religion are full of this conviction; they call their works histories, and attempt to show that the religions of the world have a vital connection with each other and are manifestations in different ways of the same spirit."[1] How admirably this comports with what St. Paul said at Athens:[2] "God hath made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he is not far from each one of us"!

Of course I cannot go into any particulars in treating so large a topic in a few pages; I can barely allude to two or three of its salient features, and undertake to state most briefly a few of the general conclusions which I believe we

[1] History of Religion, 1895, pp. 3, 4.

[2] Acts xvii. 26, 27.

are warranted in holding as the result of investigation and reflection.[1]

1. The great national religious systems known in history — Confucianism, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Mohammedanism, as well as those of Egypt, Greece, and Rome — with all their rites, dogmas, and institutions, are to be regarded as just so many expressions of the spiritual heart-hunger of the human race. Unspiritual as many of them are, gross and superstitious and cruel as they seem to us, we are yet to see in them the gropings of man toward the light of divine truth, and the finding of some of that light, however colored by the medium of peculiar race-qualities. For it is unquestionable that each race expresses its genius, its tendencies, its character in its religion as well as in its art, its philosophy, and its social order.

[1] The reader who desires fuller information on the subject, rendered in somewhat popular form, may consult the following works: "Ten Great Religions," two vols., by James Freeman Clark, 1880–83; "Religions Before Christianity," by Prof. C. C. Everett, 1884; "History of Religion," by Prof. Allan Menzies, 1895; "Religions of Primitive Peoples," by Dr. Daniel G. Brinton, 1898; "The Story of Religions," by Rev. E. D. Price, F.G.S., 1898; and the many references which these furnish.

But the ground fact, and the grand fact, underneath all these varied expressions is that the great, common human heart has cried out for God, the living God, — that is, has yearned, aspired, struggled toward some apprehension of the unseen realities whose reflections flicker in the soul and beckon from the outer world. How impressive this fact becomes when rightly viewed!

> "So runs my dream; but what am I?
> An infant crying in the night,
> An infant crying for the light,
> And with no language but a cry!"

Even so; yet that cry voices the want and the capacity of the child of the Eternal; and nothing can satisfy it but the answering love of the Divine Paternity. "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord," says St. Augustine, "and we are restless till we rest in Thee."

2. These various religions have been the spiritual light of large portions of the human race. Sir Edwin Arnold wrote one of his great poems and called it "The Light of Asia" to celebrate the influence of Buddhism over more millions of people than are touched by any other system of religious teaching. Each of these

systems, embodying some measure of spiritual truth, beauty, and goodness, has educated untold multitudes into a clearer realization of divine things than could have been possible without any religious teachings whatever. How unsympathetic our feeling toward man, and how narrow our view of God's spiritual providence, if we suppose that the countless millions of people outside of Christendom have had no genuine faith, piety, and virtue, and that the Divine Spirit has been utterly without witness among them! How much nobler to exclaim with St. Peter, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him"! Perhaps no lesson that has been taught us by the expansive movements of modern times is more corrective of past bigotry than that which shows us that Divine Providence has cared for somebody else in this great world besides Jews and Christians.

3. Nevertheless a candid study of the different religions, as compared with Christianity, discloses the fact that they are one-sided, incomplete, inferior. Brahmanism, for example, is excessively

developed on the spiritual side, but is deficient on the moral and practical side. On the other hand, Buddhism and Confucianism are strong morally and practically, but are painfully deficient spiritually: hence they lack enthusiasm, hopefulness, the forward look; and therefore progress is wanting — although it becomes an interesting question how far the religion makes the people, and how far the people make their religion. At any rate, the vast, stagnant populations of the Orient, excepting that of Japan, lie waiting for the leaven of a bright, inspiring influence to vitalize their inert masses and raise them out of their bondage to the dead past. So I might go on, as the various writers have done in whose steps I follow here, to point out the defects of the other leading religions, — Zoroastrianism, or the religion of the Persians, Mohammedanism, and even Judaism; not merely for the sake of finding fault with them, but to show — what is really the case — that each of them is weak in some vital respect, so that it cannot satisfy the needs of a fully developed humanity, or lift a race into a complete and symmetrical spiritual life, or become the universal religion of

civilized mankind. It requires no unjust disparagement of these various religious systems to emphasize such deficiencies; they appear upon even the most sympathetic and appreciative examination of them. And while it may be freely conceded that these religions have been the legitimate products of the races that have exhibited them, and so are part and parcel of their life, and therefore may be thought quite sufficient for their needs, if not indeed better adapted thereto than any other form of religion that could be grafted upon their civilizations; yet it is plain that, just because they are thus bound up with the nature and attainments of their respective peoples, they are not able to raise those peoples to higher levels. In fact, no small part of the bondage in which so many millions of earth's population are held is precisely such a religious thraldom as results when a people's civilization has become stereotyped, immobile, lifeless,— "lying between two worlds, powerless to be born."

4. Admitting the substantial validity of this contention, it will appear upon further consideration that Christianity's pre-eminence among the

various religions of the world consists, not in the fact that it teaches truths which have never been taught by them, but rather in the fact that it includes essentially all the truths which they contain, without their errors and defects, and presents a full-orbed, harmonious, vital, and spiritual system of religious ideas, motives, and objects. Of course I am speaking of Christianity, not as misconceived by this or that exponent, but as exemplified in the words, life, and character of its great Founder, interpreted in the light of our best knowledge. And the claim is here made that the Christianity of Jesus Christ has all the valuable truth that any other religion has, and is strong where other systems are weak, and is instinct with spiritual vitality where most of them are largely formal and inert. It presents God as the infinite and adorable Spirit, to match Brahmanism; but it does not deny the existence of matter. It is as practical as Confucianism and as kind as Buddhism; but it elevates all daily life and commonplace relationships by the power of a glad, loving devotion to a Heavenly Father. It is as moral as Judaism, but is free from the hampering legalism which has burdened

the latter. It is as aggressive as Mohammedanism, but it conquers by love and not by the sword. It teaches men of heaven, and makes them think much of a glorified immortality as the destiny of the human soul; but it keeps their feet firmly planted upon the earth, and by its great doctrine of brotherhood constrains them to labor unceasingly for the universal realization of a heavenly kingdom here. Thus it is complete, symmetrical, open to progress for the soul on all sides; it fulfils the deficiencies of other systems, — that is, fills them out; and, being spiritual, free, and vital, it is adapted to human nature everywhere, and therefore appears to be the one religion that is capable of becoming universal. Best of all, perhaps, its beautiful and holy teachings were perfectly realized in the life and character of its Author, who said he came in order that men might have life in abundance, and who therefore could justly say, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

Here, then, is a clear indication — albeit only meagrely presented — of Christianity's true place among the other religions of the world. It does not antagonize what is good and true in them,

but rather responds thereto by paralleling it. "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil," said Jesus; and one cannot help believing that, if he were here to-day, he would refer in this remark not only to the lawgivers and prophets of Israel, but equally to the ethical and religious teachers of every land and age. His religion is the mighty friend and helper of all good influences and instrumentalities on earth, — the ally and promoter of law and liberty, of learning and love, of peace and prosperity, of individual development, social righteousness, and universal progress. And because it is thus a large, complete, and apparently perfect religion, it not only sympathizes in these ways with the virtues of others, but supplements them and so leads on to higher attainments. It rounds out to its own fulness and balance those partial apprehensions of divine truth which have been, for countless millions of God's children, foregleams of that ampler dispensation which, in the evolution of the human race, was bound to come somewhere, sometime, and which at length will be recognized as "the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Now the foregoing views reveal the basis, so far as it lies in the needs of the great, outlying religious world, for all Christian missions. That basis is threefold, — consisting in the prevalent condition of mankind, the inadequacy of the non-Christian religions to cope with the problem, and the affectionate proffer of help which Christianity is able to make.

1. One does not have to picture the teeming millions of earth's population as trembling on the verge of the "bottomless pit," in imminent peril of everlasting damnation, in order to appreciate their need of all the spiritual assistance which can possibly be rendered them. The degradation and misery actually existing in this world constitute a sufficiently terrible perdition, for one who believes in the divine worth of the human soul, to evoke the utmost sympathy and alleviating effort. If suffering or sin at our very doors calls for our aid, and we acknowledge our obligation to extend it, the obligation is fundamentally and essentially as binding wherever sin and suffering are found; and the deplorable fact is that they abound in appalling proportions throughout the world. Nor does it matter par-

ticularly how they have come about. As Dr. Richard S. Storrs has well said, "It makes no difference really, or very little, at this point, whether we accept the Scriptural declaration that man has fallen from a higher estate to his present level, or conceive, with some modern theorizers, that man is just now partially emerging from the conditions of his brute-ancestry, stumbling up, through sin and error and manifold tremendous mistakes, toward wisdom and virtue, and the blessedness which they bring. In either case the present condition of mankind is one of imperfection, weakness, unsatisfied desire, unrealized promise, and manifold peril. It is not the missionary who tells us this, principally or alone. Every observant foreign traveller repeats the same." And he portrays the situation a little more specifically by adding, "We need not fix our thought, prominently, on the more devilish crimes which still exist in parts and portions of the earth, — cannibalism, infanticide, human sacrifices, self-torture, the slavery that would destroy body and soul together in its own hell. Commoner vices have told us the story sufficiently, — drunkenness, licentiousness,

the gambling passion, the opium habit, the fierce self-will that rushes to its end, regardless of anything sacred, in order to attain its pleasure. All these we know. How familiar they are to the mind, and in the life of the world at large!"[1] Such words afford us a hint, yet only a general hint, of the evils to be encountered in the wide fields of human society, where the kingdom of heaven is to be established. Whoever knows the facts must see the need; whoever heeds them must respond to the summons.

2. If hereupon one asks why the non-Christian religions are not good enough for the peoples who cherish them, the answer is that they are not adequate to meet these overwhelming demands, and furthermore that these religions themselves need the influence of Christianity for their own improvement.

It is plain that the conditions just depicted will require all the intellectual, moral, and religious forces of the whole world combined and working for centuries for their overcoming. Granting therefore that Brahmanism, Buddhism, and all the other religions are mighty fac-

[1] Addresses on Foreign Missions, 1900, pp. 175, 176.

tors, we cannot deny that they may be powerfully reinforced by Christianity. It is somewhat like saying that Roman Catholicism in any American city, while doing its own work in its own way very effectually, is not equal to the whole task of thoroughly Christianizing the entire community, but may be most profitably supplemented by Protestantism. The fact is that all the spiritual energies and agencies of every type of civilization are needed to lift mankind out of ignorance, cruelty, vice, crime, and misery; and at best the problem will take ages for its full solution.

Besides, who can doubt that, whatever the excellences of any other religion, the influence of Christianity upon them may be salutary? It would seem to be well-nigh self-evident that it must exalt, vivify, and intensify the best spiritual teachings of every form of religion with which it may come in contact. And, as a matter of fact, much of the religious teaching of the world, as already shown, is powerless to lift its adherents to any higher plane of life. Therefore I say that perhaps the first mission of Christianity to the peoples of the earth is to their *religions*. Man is a being of such potential capacity as to deserve

the best possible religion. Nothing is too good for him — so God thought when He raised up Jesus Christ. The better religious teachings a man can have, as well as the better governments, schools, newspapers, and books, the better kind of a man he will be, in the long run. And if religion is one-half so powerful a factor as our study goes to show, how urgent becomes the need of the very best religion obtainable, in order that the world may be the more speedily "delivered out of the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God"! Surely the mission of Christ's Gospel to all other religions must tend to promote this.

3. Once more, the very nature of Christianity itself impels it to proffer itself. It is a giving religion. Its Founder gave himself, and he said to his followers: "Freely ye have received, freely give." It is a serving, helping, loving religion. It regards all men as children of a common Father; therefore as brothers one of another; and therefore as needing all brotherly kindness at the hands of their fellow-men. Accordingly whoever becomes really a Christian, in principle

and spirit, will *want* to give himself, as the Master did, in sincere and loving service to God's needy children. He will *want* to share his blessings with his brethren; and he will believe very solemnly that this is "the will of God in Christ Jesus" concerning every Christian. Therefore, if he sees wretchedness and destitution, material or spiritual, which he can relieve, he will feel himself under divine command to perform such a service, and he will be glad to do it. He accepts Christ as his Master, and he desires to bring his own life into compliance with that Master's teaching. He conceives that he is called to do what he can to be a helper of Christ, a fellow-laborer with God; and therefore he girds himself to toil, to sacrifice, if need be to suffer, in order that the will of God to redeem mankind from all evil may be fulfilled. Thus Christianity becomes, by reason of its spiritual nature, a missionary religion. Hence to repudiate the claim of missions, the obligation to give of one's self in loving service to human need, under a sense of divine sanction, is to repudiate the essential teaching of Jesus Christ.

Seeing that Christian missions are thus required, both by the needs of the great, outlying world and by the very nature of Christianity, all secondary questions as to object, motive, method, and results may be left to be answered by growing experience and wisdom.

It is proper to remark that these subordinate questions have not been answered altogether wisely or truly in the past; and some of us have been out of sympathy with much of the zealous missionary work of the nineteenth century because of its narrow conception of Divine Providence and its erroneous interpretation of divine truth. We have not responded to the appeal to send out missionaries to snatch men from the brink of a bottomless pit which to us was purely imaginary; and we have scarcely felt a genuine interest in exporting to foreign lands a type of theology which we believed ought never to have existed here.

But all such criticisms sink into insignificance before the larger meanings of this mighty missionary movement of modern times. It was better to have made a poor beginning than to have made none at all. It was simply impos-

sible that a growing knowledge of the vast non-Christian world could come to men, and they continue forever indifferent to the spiritual condition of its myriad millions. Even the iron dogma of divine sovereignty, that bulwark of Calvinism, had to go down some time before the inrushing tides of human interest from the ocean of so-called heathenism. The nations of the earth were bound to become known to our Western Christendom, and, becoming known, were bound to engage the attention of Christian hearts. Doing so, those hearts could give only what they had to give, — their pity, their sympathy, their love, their helping hand, their conceptions of God's truth and providence. What matter if these were very imperfect, very unsatisfactory, as measured by to-day's ideals? They were the best the Christians of Europe and America had to give; and whoever gives of his best to help humanity soon has more and better to give. Thus it has been here; and so there has grown up a far purer type of Christianity to send abroad, — a truer theology, a larger sympathy, a nobler object to seek than the salvation of men from a future endless hell, a holier, more

Christ-like motive than proselytism and ecclesiastical glory; until now it may be said, in all seriousness, that the present work of Protestant foreign missions is a great, grand phase of the Christian education of the world. It is part and parcel — the spiritual part and parcel — of the vast expansion which has taken place during the last five hundred years, mentioned at the opening of this chapter. As such it has but fairly commenced. It will go on. It will spread. It will gather momentum. It will not rest until the kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

Is it said that this is a costly work, or that it is really an impertinence to thrust our religion upon foreign peoples, and that the best thing for us to do is to stay at home and mind our own business, of which we have about all we can handle? My answer to all such objections is simply a comprehensive plea for the free circulation of ideas in this world. Just as the waters of the ocean are kept pure by currents, and trade-winds, and storms, — driving, tossing, tumbling, mixing them all round the globe; so is the ocean of human life kept pure, or in process of healthy

development, by the mingling and mixture of races and all spiritual influences. Therefore I believe in freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of travel, freedom of trade, and freedom of religious teaching — always with due regard to the rights and liberties of people who differ. Hence I believe in Christian missions to foreign lands; only they must subsist in love, not by force, — in the love of truth, the love of right, the love of man, the love of God. So subsisting, they will help to bring the Kingdom of God to pass as a glorious reality in all the earth.

The missionary work of modern Christendom is a gigantic enterprise. It contemplates nothing less than the ultimate, complete evangelization of the world. Even as it is conducted at present it is one of the largest undertakings ever inaugurated. In order that it may go forward with growing power and efficiency, three things at least are absolutely indispensable, namely: that it shall rest upon an adequate basis; that it shall be inspired by a permanently legitimate motive; and that it shall continually educate its constituents to a comprehension of its true meaning,

so that they shall feel their responsibility and do their duty. As a thoughtful man reviews the history of the movement and the existing situation, he is encouraged to believe that the followers of Jesus Christ will increasingly appreciate his parting injunction, — "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.

N studying the spiritual conditions, forces, and tendencies of our age, some serious thought must be given to the subject of this chapter. Remembering that the theme of these pages is religion, considered in a broad sense, as a living reality, as a spiritual power manifesting itself in various outward forms; and remembering that their dominant purpose is to interpret as truly and justly as possible the workings of this great power in our present civilization, it becomes apparent that Christian Science deserves our attention because of its religious implications. For it is professedly, if not primarily, a religious movement; and in my judgment it is the religious aspects of its influence that need most urgently to be understood. I think the other side of it, the question of its healing ministry, should be approached from this religious side; and I am

strongly persuaded that a clear and correct understanding of the part played in it by the religious element will answer more than half of our questions about the problem of its curative agency. Therefore I am mainly concerned with the whole phenomenal development as a phase of religious evolution. It is chiefly in this character that it appeals to me as a student of Christian history; and it is because I do not feel entirely satisfied with the accounts of its origin and growth given by either its friends or its enemies that I am led to offer my own explanation.

It should surprise no one that the popular interest in this new cult is enlisted mainly by its offices of healing. Sickness and suffering, and restoration to health and happiness, whenever occurring, are very palpable facts, — to the majority of people indeed they seem far more real than do fine and high spiritual experiences. Doubtless most of those who have been drawn to Christian Science in the past have come to it through the avenue of physical benefits, conferred upon themselves or upon their acquaintances; and it is probable that such will be the case in the future. Let us not forget that pre-

cisely similar was the commencement of Christianity. Men and women were attracted to Jesus by his works of healing; likewise to the Apostles; and who shall say to what extent the practical services of the Christian Church, during all the centuries, in the alleviation of human misery, whether by the exercise of supposedly miraculous powers, or by alms-giving, or by manifold institutions of philanthropy, or by the agencies of education and reform, have won the respect of mankind for the gospel, and thus have led directly to the acceptance of its spiritual teachings? Are we not all the time appealing to the long and splendid record of just such services as a proof of the beneficence, and therefore the truthfulness, of Christianity? and do we not ask people to support our churches partly because they minister to the actual needs of men in body as well as in soul? In the work of foreign missions to-day a large use is made of physicians, nurses, and secular teachers. Why? Not simply because such helpers can do the people great good, although this consideration should be sufficient in itself to warrant their employment; but also because they open the

way for the religious teacher, who, when he gains access to the minds and hearts of the natives, bestows upon them the higher blessings of the spirit. But in all this nobody is deceived. In none of these instances — with Jesus, or the Apostles, or the great Christian leaders of the past, or the true teachers and wise workers of the present — has there been any thought of making the physical benefits of Christianity's ministry superior to the spiritual. On the contrary, wherever the true nature of the gospel has been understood, its cleansing spiritual power, its service to the soul, has been held to constitute its principal value; and all other good results flowing from its influence, in material ways, have been regarded as distinctly subordinate. It will be so in the long run — I think it should be so now — with Christian Science. Its chief importance will lie in its spiritual ministry; and its works of healing will or should be incidental to its service in behalf of vital religious interests.

I. In estimating for myself and for those of my readers who care to follow me here the religious nature and bearing of Christian Science, I begin with two or three preliminary remarks.

1. I frankly acknowledge that I do not claim to have made an exhaustive study of this subject; indeed, I suppose, if we are to accept the utterances of those most interested and best qualified to judge, it never can be exhausted. But the matter has come to my notice in many ways during the last ten or twelve years, — partly through conversations with a considerable number of dear friends who have been converted to the new teachings, and have seemed quite competent to tell me about them; and partly through reading no small amount of literature on the subject, including expositions by such authoritative writers and speakers as Editor Septimus J. Hanna, Judge W. G. Ewing, Prof. Theodore F. Seward, Rev. Arthur R. Vosburg, and especially the founder of the system, Mrs. Mary Baker G. Eddy, besides numerous criticisms, both mild and severe — mostly severe — from opponents. I trust, therefore, that I am not wholly ignorant of the real character and purport of Christian Science; and I desire particularly to state that I speak for no one but myself, except where I quote and give credit.

2. In my thought upon the subject I have

tried to keep myself from prejudice, the bane of so much discussion of religious or semi-religious questions. I have no sympathy with ridicule, sarcasm, and sneers, in place of intelligence and candor, in treating any sacred and vital interest; nor do I attach any real value to traditionalism on the one hand, or to novelty and "fadism" on the other hand. As thinking people, our supreme business is to seek the truth; and neither former views nor the security of existing institutions should blind us to new light. If many persons of noble character are leaving our churches and going into Christian Science churches, it behooves us to ask ourselves the reason why. Scolding will do no good, calling hard names is undignified, and misrepresentation is always fraught with dire mischief. Rather should it be our aim, while judging as critically as possible respecting every question involved, to be fair-minded and open-minded; and, above all, should we endeavor to rise to an altitude from which we may view the whole subject in a large way as having some legitimate place in the general spiritual movement of our age.

3. I think it somewhat unfortunate that the term "Christian Science" has been adopted to designate this new development. The late Professor David Swing said that the only trouble with it was that it was neither Christian nor scientific; but my own opinion is that there is a very large Christian element in it, but very little science, and that it is the Christianity in it which carries its claims to be scientific. The word *science* has come to have a strict signification, and to every true scholar it is about as sacred as any word in the language. It denotes exact, classified, verified knowledge, — a body of learning that has been slowly, carefully, almost painfully built up, by a host of intellectual toilers, through patient observation, clear inference, and thorough tests; and its established positions become the common property of all students who seek by the same reliable processes to enlarge still further the boundaries of real knowledge. And I think Professor Joseph Jastrow is quite right in insisting that "the possibility of science rests on the thorough and absolute distinction between the subjective and the objective. In what measure a man loses the power to draw this distinction

clearly, and as other men do, in that measure he becomes irrational or insane. The objective exists; and no amount of thinking it away or thinking it differently will change it. That is what is understood by ultimate scientific truth; something that will endure unmodified by passing ways of viewing it, open to every one's verification who comes with the proper means to verify, — a permanent objective, to be ascertained by careful, logical inquiry, not to be determined by subjective opinion."[1] Therefore it does not seem entirely proper to use this precisely significant word to cover a group of personal experiences, intuitive perceptions, and religious influences, pertaining to the spiritual realm, which are more legitimately dealt with by philosophy.

Yet fairness requires us to recognize the fact that there is an accommodated sense in which the word *science*, like the word *evolution*, or many another term of large scope, is continually employed. Years ago Rev. Minot J. Savage published a fresh, stimulating little book entitled "Christianity the Science of Manhood." That was an accommodated use of the word *science*.

[1] Fact and Fable in Psychology, p. 33.

In such a sense the term is allowable to comprise the teachings and methods of the system which is here under consideration. Perhaps, however, if Mrs. Eddy had been a trained scholar, accustomed to the exact and discriminating choice of words which rules as an unwritten law in the realm of scholarship, or if she had been less mystical in the cast of her mind, she might have avoided much of that peculiar terminology which has undoubtedly occasioned many of the misunderstandings and criticisms that her teachings have provoked. But then she might not have given the world the vivid apprehension of certain truths which it now owes largely to her, and for which, I am persuaded, it will be increasingly grateful!

II. Coming now to state my own theory of the rise and growth of the Christian Science movement, I start with the general remark that there are two sides to it, which, although they are conjoined in practice, need to be sharply distinguished in thought, — the psychological side and the religious side. Leaving the former, at present, to the professional psychologists, who, like Professor Hugo Münsterberg of Harvard

University, and Professor Joseph Jastrow of the University of Wisconsin, assign it a place in modern mysticism or occultism, along with Theosophy, Spiritualism, Mesmerism, Hypnotism, Astrology, Phrenology, etc., much to the disgust of the friends of these respective systems; and without undertaking to pronounce any opinion upon the merits of such an assignment, or upon the conflicting claims of these rival interpretations, I want to confine myself just now to a glance at the latter, the religious, aspect of the development in the light of Christian history; and then I want to point out the vital spiritual contents of this new teaching, which give it its chief beauty and power.

1. Taking, then, a long retrospect, let us remember that Jesus of Nazareth inculcated a most exalted yet simple and natural gospel of divine truth and spiritual living. It was full of heavenly wisdom and sweet grace, of light and love, of peace and joy. A child could understand its central principle, and a philosopher could not get beyond its practical bearing. It unveiled the face of God, showing Him to be a dear Father; and it disclosed the inherent dig-

nity and worth of the human soul as nothing else had ever done. It opened the fountains of sympathy and all forms of beneficence in society; it made righteousness a living reality; it awakened in man a consciousness of his divine sonship; and it brought a new vision of purity, holiness, and happiness to a world that was weary of its religious formalities and its spiritual dearth, as well as of its sorrows and its sins. Even to-day the words of this heavenly teaching are like a stream in the desert to our thirsty souls, and no other message has such power to bring us to our deeper selves or put us so surely into harmony with the infinite Spirit.

Let us remember, too, that Jesus exemplified this blessed teaching in his own life and character. He was meek and lowly in heart, majestic, serene, magnanimous, gentle. Yet he was strong, fearless, invincible, a hater of shams, a lover of all goodness. He had insight to detect every error, appreciation for every evidence of virtue and love, and an exaltation of spirit that made him walk in constant and reverent communion with God. He was faithful unto death, vic-

torious over evil, and a sufferer who could forgive even his murderers.

Let us remember, once more, that he went about doing good; that he used the high powers he possessed to help his fellow-men; that his boundless compassion led him to give himself in loving service to every form of human need that he encountered. The simple record of the Narrative is that "he went round about through all their villages and cities, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." I do not know how he performed these works of healing; I have my thoughts on the subject; doubtless my readers have theirs. It seems probable to me that some of the alleged acts of this character did not occur at all; but it seems unquestionable that others did occur, and that he was endowed somehow with unusual gifts for such a physical ministry.

And so we have this clear, threefold picture of a sublime Teaching, a serene Teacher, and a gentle Healer, bringing spiritual blessings and

some relief from bodily ills to the children of men nineteen hundred years ago.

2. Consider, now, how sadly albeit inevitably this simple historical picture, with its vital meanings, has been distorted during the intervening centuries. The Master's contemporaries did not understand him; they were too much occupied with their own preconceptions to listen to him without bias; and they were so absorbed in visions and dreams of coming glory that they overlooked the simplicity of his instruction. St. Paul and the men who followed him philosophized about it; and a little later the influence of Greek speculative thought gave such an intellectual twist to it as to fix its formulas so that they have endured from the third century to the twentieth. Upon that philosophical basis the Roman Catholic Church, inheriting the genius of Roman statecraft, and inspired with a new ambition for a new and stupendous mission, built up its mighty ecclesiastical fabric. Then followed the domination of the Scholastic theology of the Middle Age; then came the Protestant revolt, with its new birth of liberty and spiritual religion; but then the old influences

reasserted themselves, and there succeeded an era of Protestant Scholasticism; and not until within the last fifty years has our Western Christendom begun to free itself very largely from those artificial conditions which were thus imposed upon it in the remote and turbulent past.

What has been the result of all this? Why, we have had a philosophical Christianity, an ecclesiastical Christianity, and a dogmatic Christianity, overloaded with the intellectual element, in place of the simple, vital, spiritual Christianity of Jesus Christ, — warm, human, tender, loving, and full of the Divine Spirit. Traditional Christianity has been largely a far-off, unreal, mysterious thing, which has kept up a show of supernaturalism by magnifying the miraculous; and, oh, the pity of it all has been that, while it has professed to bring men near to God, it has really stood between them and Him! I am not surprised that so many people have held aloof from the Christian Church; I am rather surprised that so many have endured its wretched perversions of the gospel; and I am very sure that the sweet water of Christ's own words and spirit

has been the chief refreshment of our race through all this long wilderness.

3. But now we must note that we have come to a time when, through the liberalizing influences of modern civilization, these old bonds are loosening their hold and these old interpositions are being thrust aside. The dogmatic interest has declined, the controversies of a hundred years ago are worn out, and heart-hungry souls are seeking a more simple, spiritual appreciation of the life-giving teachings of the Son of Man. They are weary of strife, weary of running ecclesiastical machinery, weary of religious forms that have neither spontaneity nor joy because they have no vitality. I fear we do not realize to what an extent we let our religious expression take on a sombre hue, and how much we dwell on the sad side of life. Certain I am that what people really want, whether they know it or not, is a religion of life, strength, beauty, and gladness, — a religion of real faith, hope, and love, — a religion of sweet and *genuine* love to God and man. If they do not find this in our Christian churches, where of all places on earth they ought to expect it, they will seek it else-

where; and if they think they find it in other circles of thought, even though it be mixed with some error, they will gravitate thereto.

4. Now reflect that Christian Science meets this situation with a version of Christianity which, say what you will of its uncritical character, is instinct with life. It is fresh, unconventional, spontaneous; it lays aside the old theological terminology and the old ceremonies, creating new ones to take their places; it has a vivid grasp of spiritual truth, however bent in its hands you may think it; and it seems to succeed in bringing the great gospel of Jesus Christ down into the actualities of life, to become the reigning power of holy love in the souls and bodies of men, as no other interpretation appears to do. In an age when the materialistic influence of scientific discovery has been widely felt, and when the churches that grew out of theological disagreements are at the end of their dogmatic career, it is not strange that large numbers of thoughtful, earnest, spiritually minded people should find relief and positive inspiration in a phase of Christian teaching that is thus free and vital.

Perhaps the justice of this last remark will be plainer, and we shall see the logical culmination of the foregoing review, if we look at the essential contents of the Christian Science system. Using my own words to state them, I should say that they are as follows: —

(1) *The doctrine of the Divine immanence.* By this is meant the truth that God dwells, not outside of the universe, but within it; and therefore dwells, not only outside of human life, but within it. The omnipresence and the immanence of God may be said to mean what Mr. John Fiske implies in saying that "the infinite and eternal Power that is manifested in every pulsation of the universe is none other than the living God," and that "the everlasting source of phenomena is none other than the infinite Power that makes for righteousness."[1] The Christian Scientist says that God is all. What this really means is that God is the Soul of the universe, its all-pervading Life; and this corresponds exactly to the position of philosophical idealism, that the universe in the last analysis is spiritual. If such is the idea which the Christian Scientist intends

[1] The Idea of God, pp. 166, 167.

to convey, — and in all fairness it appears to me to be plainly so,[1] — there is nothing new in it whatever; and it might seem better to express it in customary terms. But the truth of the Divine immanence is a very important one, and has come to occupy a large place in progressive theology at present, — quite independently, however, of the influence of Christian Science.

(2) *The doctrine of a higher and a lower nature in man,* — divine mind and mortal mind, as it is called. This is quite similar to St. Paul's theory that human nature, prior to Christ, was twofold, that is, physical and psychical; but after

[1] Since writing this paragraph I have read much *pro* and *con* respecting the point here considered, including Mrs. Eddy's Message of June 23, 1901; but I see no reason for changing a single word in the above statement. I think any proper construction of Mrs. Eddy's language, allowing duly for peculiarities of expression, must yield substantially the interpretation which I have presented. She is no more at sea in trying to tell what God is than are all the rest of us; and it may be pertinent to remember this additional word of Mr. Fiske's: "We may exhaust the resources of metaphysics in debating how far his [God's] nature may fitly be expressed in terms applicable to the psychical nature of Man; such vain attempts will only serve to show how we are dealing with a theme that must ever transcend our finite powers of conception." — Ibid. p. 166.

Christ, became threefold, that is, physical, psychical, and pneumatical or spiritual. You remember his remark, "The natural [psychical] man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them; for they are spiritually discerned."[1] His meaning is perfectly plain when we understand that he believed that man, untouched by Christ, was merely an animal and a soul, that is, an intelligent or rational creature; but that, when quickened by the Spirit of Jesus, he became "a new man," a spiritual being. Hence he says that "the first man Adam was made a living soul," that is, a psychical being; "the last Adam a life-giving spirit."[2] Hence also Paul has a great deal to say about the office of the Spirit, the life of the Spirit, the mind of the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit. Christian Science, therefore, is not giving us anything really new in this doctrine of "mortal mind" and "divine mind." I suppose at bottom it means what you and I mean when we talk about our lower nature and our higher nature, — the difference between our unspiritual life

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 14 *et seq.* [2] 1 Cor. xv. 45.

and the life that is vivified with the breath of God; and, oh, we do not know one half so much about this latter, diviner life as we might and should. The real mission of Christianity is to awaken us to this better, truer, more blessed life; such is the grand object of Christian Science; and such an awakenment, when accomplished, is salvation indeed.

(3) *The doctrine that God is love, and that love is all-powerful.* This appears to be the central idea or principle or truth in Christian Science. Surely it is as old as the gospel of Jesus and the literature of the New Testament. The First Epistle of John tells us that "God is love," and "he that loveth is born of God and knoweth God;" and also that, "if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." Wherein does Christian Science differ from all other forms of Christianity in setting forth this teaching, unless it be in implicitly and absolutely accepting it? The trouble with many of us is that we only half believe; we do not really give ourselves up to the full logic and force of our conceptions and theories; we satisfy ourselves with the mere perception of

truth, and cheat ourselves with words; we do not *realize* our ideals and doctrines in action and character. If we were to do so, we should quickly see what Jesus meant in summing up his gospel as love to God and love to man. Alas! the world has practised so largely and so long the principle of selfishness, in private conduct, in business, in civil affairs, and in military strife, that it has not yet fairly begun to comprehend the scope or the potency of the heavenly teaching of Jesus Christ involving the absolute supremacy of the holy spirit of divine love. Thankful should we be for any agency that may promote the influence of this most vital of all conceptions!

(4) Christian Science goes a step further, and asserts *the health-giving or saving power of this holy love.* It declares that, if a man will but yield himself up to the Divine Spirit, letting the tides of its life-giving influence flow through his being, it will cleanse him in soul and body. Without disputing, for the moment, about the extent to which this thought may be carried, I am sure we must acknowledge that it is a vital and profound truth. "The Spirit also helpeth

our infirmities," [1] said St. Paul. Spirituality gives health to the soul, and through the soul it must benefit the body. Who that has ever tried it does not know this? Whatever helps us to live upon a higher plane, whatever puts us into harmony with the laws of the universe and the laws of our own being, conduces to wholeness; and wholeness is only another name for holiness. Love is life, and life is health, and health is joy and peace. I am sure that this is good Christian doctrine, and that it is a great, inspiring, sorely needed message for sinning and suffering mortals. What else is the spiritual burden of Christianity? and what but this, accepted, believed, obeyed, will ever redeem mankind from the thraldom of evil? Let it have the fullest possible scope!

(5) Finally, Christian Science teaches that *all this truth was realized in the character and work of Jesus;* who knew that the spiritual universe is subject to law, even as is the material; who lived in constant and beautiful harmony with such spiritual law by living in the power of holy love; and who therefore was full of

[1] Rom. viii. 26.

spiritual vitality, because he was possessed and used of God. Consequently he was able to help men in both spiritual and physical ways; but his power in this respect was simply the power of God operating through him, — as he himself said, "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." And now it is merely added that any person who will live in such harmony with God, surrendering himself in body and soul to the power of Divine Love, may likewise help and heal his fellow-men. Thus we may be imitators of Christ, laborers together with God, and benefactors of our kind in the highest possible ways.

Now, if this account of the essential teachings of Christian Science is approximately correct, — and, as nearly as I can make out, it is substantially true and accurate, although perhaps incomplete, — then I do not see where there is anything very bad about it, or wherein it differs much from any spiritual interpretation of the gospel. Thus far, viewing it strictly in its religious aspects, it appears to be merely a peculiar type of Christianity, — fully as Christian in spirit, thought, and influence as many another type

which has occupied the field of history. As such it must do far more good than harm, and its reaction upon the established churches must tend to vitalize and spiritualize their teaching and work.

Of course the great truths just set forth are largely colored for Christian Scientists by their relation to physical healing and by various minor views of nature and human nature that are somewhat peculiar. They were originally apprehended and wrought out by the founder of this system through her own remarkable experiences and achievements in such a relation; and undoubtedly her statement of them and of associated ideas bears the marks of those limitations which any individual mind must possess. Perhaps no small amount of error, even from the religious standpoint, may be detected in the customary exposition of the system. For one thing, I think the treatment of the Scriptures usually shows a sad lack of acquaintance with the ruling conceptions of modern Biblical scholarship, so that many of its interpretations and applications are invalid; and, for another thing, I question whether it gives an adequate account of the

genesis of sin, or makes a sufficient use of the great Scriptural doctrine of righteousness. But such errors and defects, though they may be numerous and in themselves serious enough, and though they be coupled with some notions that seem to other people absurd, cannot nullify the fundamental spiritual truths which form the main doctrines, the dominant principles, of Christian Science. It is the force and bearing of these by which chiefly it should be judged. So judging it, I contend that it is entitled to be recognized as a noble and helpful type of Christian thought, worship, and work; and I repeat that we shall be likely to do it gross injustice if we fail to approach it and appreciate it in its religious aspect, first of all.

Passing now to the other, the psychological, side of Christian Science, to consider its ministry of healing, I have not much to say; and yet a word or two is required by what I have already said. It seems to me that here the professional psychologist is able largely to solve the problem by showing the nature and laws of suggestion to be of much wider scope than most of us are

aware, — only we must not forget to conjoin with this power the wonderful religious influence which I have depicted. You can see that when such a vital, spiritual, earnest faith and surrender toward God shall bring a willing, passive soul into harmony with the laws of the spiritual realm, the conditions are ripe for the force of suggestion to produce surprising results. How far it may go, I do not presume even to guess. All I see is that the conjunctive operation of a vital spiritual influence and the marvellous power of suggestion and thought, in a recipient field, may reasonably account for stranger healing effects than are usually supposed to be possible.

Beyond this general remark I do not care to pursue the discussion, — partly because this phase of the subject has been and will be abundantly considered by others, and the truth will slowly but surely come out; and partly also because I do not feel competent to express anything like a conclusive opinion, even for myself. I have had no personal experience with Christian Science as a method of healing, and perhaps I should say that my attitude toward it in this

guise has usually inclined to be unfavorable. But for this very reason I feel all the more that I ought to hold my judgment in abeyance until I know more about this aspect of the case than I do now. I am willing to wait for light, and I want to be open-minded enough to receive whatever truth may come from whatsoever source. *We do not know it all yet.*

And now, in conclusion, it may not be out of place to offer a few words of kindly caution and counsel for the benefit of all concerned.

1. I think Christian Scientists should "go slow" in attempting to treat such malignant diseases as diphtheria, scarlet fever, smallpox, etc., where the life of the patient and the lives of others are in extreme danger. I think they can afford to be very careful here; and certainly the interests of society are such as to justify the most stringent regulations respecting so radically different a method of treatment as Christian Science employs. The learning of the centuries is not all amiss; medical science is as valid as any other science of our age; and mankind is so vastly indebted to it that it cannot be reasonably

asked to throw its teachings and services to the winds. Let Christian Scientists give society and every patient who is in imminent danger the benefit of the doubt. They can afford to wait.

2. I think Christian Scientists should beware of the prostituting principle of gain. The element of money necessarily enters into this new system very largely. But history, from the days of Simon Magus to those of modern Spiritualism, shows that the very nature of all occult phenomena pertaining to the border-land of soul and body opens up great possibilities of self-deception, the deception of others, charlatanry, and fraud. The opportunities for pecuniary profit offer a subtle but potent temptation to those who enter this realm. Heaven keep the Christian Scientists from prostituting their holy cause to selfish and base ends! Heaven help them to hold themselves to the high plane of pure spiritual devotion to which, I believe, it is their dominant desire to lift the world!

3. Finally, both Christian Scientists and their opponents should profit by criticism and further developments. No system of teaching or healing

was ever struck out that was perfect and final at once. Evolution has reigned everywhere and always, whether men have known it or not. There is yet more truth to break forth from the great Book of Nature, which is the Book of God. The mind of man is expanding and taking in more and more of the meaning of the universe. We shall all have to revise somewhat our previous interpretations, and keep on revising them forever. Let us be willing to learn, glad to learn, anxious to learn. Therefore let us be patient with one another, hear what all earnest souls have to say, and wait till we shall know even as also we are known.

Special Note. — After giving the above estimate, in which I have conscientiously sought to do justice to the favorable features of Christian Science, it is due to my readers as well as to myself that I should add an explicit statement of the reasons why I cannot entirely acquiesce in this interesting system of teaching. While I am perfectly sincere in the appreciation which I have expressed, I cannot allow myself to be called a Christian Scientist for the following reasons: —

1. I am a thorough believer in the great doctrine of Evolution, as accepted and expounded by the majority (I suppose) of modern physical scientists, and which is profoundly Theistic and spiritual as interpreted by writers like John Fiske and John Bascom; but Christian Science practically ignores, if it does not deny, this doctrine. I have looked almost in vain, in such writings of Christian Scientists as have fallen under

my eye, including Mrs. Eddy's two principal volumes, for a recognition of this stupendous, reconstructive theory of modern times ; and the very few allusions to it which I have found have distinctly disparaged it. A request for an authoritative statement touching the matter brings from headquarters a courteous, kindly response, but no information that essentially modifies this criticism.

2. I am likewise a thorough believer in the general view of the Bible yielded by modern Biblical Criticism ; and this, also, is practically ignored, if not denied and opposed, by Christian Science. Mrs. Eddy shows very little knowledge of it, and the expositions of Scripture put forth by those of her followers whose writings I have read take almost no note of the flood of light which this noble department of modern scholarship has thrown upon the pages of Holy Writ.

3. Christian Scientists appear to accept Mrs. Eddy, virtually, as an infallible interpreter of the Bible ; and I am unable to do this because her interpretations are frequently and palpably erroneous, in my humble opinion. She makes an excessively personal use of the Scriptures, and finds recondite, spiritual meanings in words and passages which in reality have nothing of the kind. For a single example or two, see the significations given to the words "Euphrates" and "Eve" in the Glossary of "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," showing her purely arbitrary manner of reading whatever ideas she chooses into a Biblical term, — a method of interpretation that renders it easy for any man to make the Bible teach anything he pleases.

4. Finally, I am a lover of clear, sound, logical thought ; and while I recognize a certain value in mysticism, I am never ready to plunge into a fog-bank of vague, dreamy, invalid speculation ; and Christian Science seems to me to have this fault in a large degree. Rationalism must keep company with mysticism, or we shall utterly lose our way in the trackless deep of inquiry and aspiration.

The last remark might properly lead to a consideration of the

fact that Christian Science is but a single phase of a widespread movement of thought and feeling that may be called *the new mysticism*, arising from many sources and assuming various forms. But I am not disposed to enter upon a discussion of this point. It will doubtless receive its full meed of attention from more competent writers.

W. C. S.

THE INFLUENCE OF UNIVERSALISM AND UNITARIANISM.

THE INFLUENCE OF UNIVERSALISM AND UNITARIANISM.

NO survey of the significant religious developments of our time would be complete without a glance, both retrospective and prospective, at the work of Universalism and Unitarianism. Although the two organic bodies representing these phases of thought are among the smallest of extant Christian communions, the influence of the truth which they have taught has been very extensive. It lies imbedded in the spiritual history of the nineteenth century like a jewel in a mass of quartz, or runs through the varied manifestations of its inner life like a beautiful love-story through a work of fiction. Any intelligent reading of this volume of human experience must include a just appreciation of those aspirations toward a sweeter and more rational interpretation of Christianity which have expressed themselves, however inadequately, in these sister households

of faith. If we really want to understand the great spiritual movement of our age, as related to the long past out of which it has issued and to the glorious future into which it leads, we cannot allow ourselves, from prejudice or indifference, to overlook an aspect of thought and feeling that reveals some of those deeper workings of the Spirit of Truth which betoken the sure though silent progress of civilization.

If it be asked why Universalism and Unitarianism should be considered together, the answer must be, Because they are closely allied in their history, their ruling ideas, the effects they have produced, and their present tendencies. This fact has not always been recognized, and indeed the alleged correspondence is questioned, if not plainly denied, by a few persons, even among those intimately concerned, to-day. But I have given much attention to the matter, seeking to be intelligent and just in my judgment; and I am sure of my ground in claiming that, substantially and essentially, these two denominational movements have as much in common as any other two that can be pointed out in modern Christendom. Similar antecedents lie

behind them in the distant past; they arose out of the same general conditions prevailing in England and America in the eighteenth century; and while there are slight differences, there are large and fundamental agreements between their main teachings at present. From the beginning both have constituted a protest, half unwitting sometimes, perhaps, but none the less earnest, against that great system of doctrine which is known in history as the Latin Theology, especially in its aggravated form of Calvinism, — rigorous in its logic, relentless in its terrors, and all but absolute in its dominion in early American life. They have repudiated the dogmatic results of Greek speculative thought lying far behind that theology, the grand but gross assumption of complete human depravity lying beneath it, and the merciless perversions of Scripture employed to buttress it with Divine sanctions. They have pleaded for the light of growing knowledge, for the fullest use of reason, for a recognition of the value of intuition, for the exercise of liberty, and for an appreciation of the Christ-like spirit as the touchstone of true religion. Although they have stood apart, work-

ing from separate vantage-points, and often unaware of each other's service, like the allied armies in the memorable siege and relief of Pekin in 1900, yet they have fought a common battle in a common cause; and therefore the names and the colors of both must be intertwined in the celebrations of victory that may aim to do them honor.

If it be asked, next, why Universalism and Unitarianism have embodied themselves in two very small organizations, each of which has had but a limited growth and is still feeble, the answer is to be found partly in the temper of the age in which they started, and partly in the magnitude of the spiritual transition which their historic development represents.

1. The lesson of religious toleration had not been perfectly learned a hundred years ago, nor indeed can it be said to have been so learned even now; the baneful influence of the past still lingered and lingers. In the days of the Inquisition the Roman Catholic Church killed its heretics, and since then has excommunicated them; while Orthodox Protestantism, if it did neither of these things, so criticised and os-

tracised those who departed from the traditional standards of belief as virtually to drive them out. At the same time those who thus departed could have little love for the ideas which they had come to reject, and could not well dwell in harmony with people still holding them. Hence, by a kind of necessity, the unbelievers — who were really the larger believers — drew away from their former associates and drew together in new groups. In this they realized the truth of what Jesus said, that "new wine must be put into fresh wine-skins" — chiefly because the old, dried skins will crack under the expansive force of the new wine.

It is an interesting question whether such a course is always best. If only the old wine-skins were a little more elastic! We complain about the numerous sects that exist; but what causes them? Insistence upon dogmatic agreement, intolerance of differences, inhospitality to new truth, — largely these, at any rate. So long as such a temper prevails in a church, progressive people must be unhappy or get out. If Universalists and Unitarians had been allowed to hold their new views in the old churches, there

would have been no need of forming two more little sects, with their special interests tending to narrowness and leading to a waste of energy; and I am not at all sure but that the cause of Truth would have been vastly better subserved if the advanced thinkers could have held their ground and slowly modified the teachings of those old churches. But the inevitable happened because the times were not ripe for a higher inevitable; and one wonders how long it is going to take the world to profit by its mistakes in these most precious interests of human life.

2. But the greatness of the task which these two denominations have been instrumental in performing is the principal justification of their organic separateness. Most people do not yet understand that the wonderful transition in religious thought which the nineteenth century has witnessed is part of a vast historical development whose sweep is through the ages, and that it is vitally connected with the new type of civilization now beginning to appear in our Western world. But it is clear to at least a few that the theological reformation which has

been wrought out in these communions during the last hundred years, and which in different ways is now commencing in various circles about us, is a legitimate continuation of that ecclesiastical reformation which found its best voice in Martin Luther nearly four centuries ago. That prior reformation itself was, in a sense, a natural product of the Renaissance, which in turn was the first great spiritual fruit of the new nations of northern Europe, that had succeeded the ancient Romans and Greeks in the control of the world. Mr. John Fiske is entirely correct in saying that "the whole course of the Protestant Reformation, from the thirteenth century to the nineteenth, is coincident with the transfer of the world's political centre of gravity from the Tiber and the Rhine to the Thames and the Mississippi."[1] Hence the transition in religious thought and feeling that so intimately concerns us really marks a stupendous change from the ideals and motives of antiquity to the radically different ideals and motives of modern times.

If we analyze this change in its broader aspects, we shall see that it consists essentially in

[1] Beginnings of New England, p. 49.

a growth away from despotism, partialism, ignorance, superstition, and fear toward liberty, fraternity, intelligence, love, and hope.

Ancient society was a huge despotism based upon partialism. Whoever possessed power usually exercised it with tyranny. Might made right. The most wanton prodigality went hand in hand with the most cruel oppressions. Slavery was the social mudsill everywhere. Between different races there was no affinity or sympathy; each race or tribe existed for itself, had its own patron divinity, and believed itself justified in warring upon every other race and against every other god as it had opportunity. Nowhere was there any thought of universal human brotherhood; only here and there could a spiritual seer of the largest vision, like Isaiah or Jeremiah, or a philosopher of comprehensive view, like Plato or Aristotle, begin to conceive of any such wide and vital social bond. The ignorance prevailing among the masses, coupled with the deep religious instinct which has always been potent in human nature, inevitably made superstition and fear the dominant forces in all actions involving

religious considerations. Thus the life of the ancient world was full of inequality and terror; and the injustice or antipathy existing between man and man, between nation and nation, was merely an exponent, half as cause and half as effect, of the strife and alienation which always seemed imminent between heaven and earth.

But all this has slowly passed away. Little by little the multitudes have risen in knowledge, skill, and strength; little by little they have wrested power out of the hands of the few and appropriated it into the hands of the many; little by little they have acquired economic and political independence; little by little intelligence has been diffused; and little by little the terrors of a supernal realm have faded out of the sky, and man, no longer afraid of his God, is beginning to learn what it means to trust and love Him. Liberty has found a permanent abiding-place in our world; the idea of brotherhood has grown apace; the sense of social responsibility has vastly deepened and strengthened; education is rapidly becoming general; superstition has largely vanished; and, in spite of much hardship

and sorrow, the children of men are able to look forward with a beautiful hope never dreamed of before. Religion is rising out of despotism, partialism, and dread into freedom, cosmopolitanism, and optimism. Who shall say, then, that it is not the dawn of a new day which we are witnessing in these wonderful years?

Without attempting to apportion to the several causes which have been at work their respective shares in the production of this grand result, it is proper to claim that Christianity, in spite of all its encumbrances of error and wrong, has been a chief agent in steadily educating our portion of the world to a loftier and purer religious and social life. Its prodigious labors may be said to have culminated, in this our own time, in bringing forth a type of religion that co-ordinates knowledge and reverence, freedom and loyalty, love to God and love to man, more successfully than it has ever been done before. Sometimes I think, in view of all this unfolding richness and beauty in the spiritual life of the present, that the transition in thought and sentiment in which we are privileged to participate is greater, because more extensive and more enlightened, than that which

marked the introduction of Christianity into the pagan world.

And it is because Universalism and Unitarianism have been helpers and leaders in this mighty transformation, however blindly and blunderingly they have wrought, that it was necessary, if not altogether wise, that they should develop in the form of organized movements distinct from all other religious bodies. Their providential mission has made their temporary isolation expedient, even as was the case with the Israelitish nation; and the calumny from which they have suffered may have done more than we are aware to purify, discipline, and strengthen the blessed spirit which they have enshrined.

Nor can any thoughtful man wonder, when he takes in the full import of this vast transformation, that these two little, separate movements should not have converted and incorporated the multitudes in a single century. The great masses of mankind are but slowly infected with new and high spiritual ideals; the momentum of history is tremendous; and a period of one or two hundred years is barely long enough to get well started in the gigantic task of reconstructing the

enormous fabric of Mediæval Christianity, whose ruling conceptions have shaped nearly all our Western thought regarding religion ever since the fall of the Roman Empire. No other change in the Christian Church since Luther's protest, whether it be the rise of Congregationalism or the outburst of Methodism or even the growth of the modern missionary movement, has been fraught with deeper lasting significance for the advance of the kingdom of heaven than this theological and ethical development whose two-fold manifestation is seen in Universalism and Unitarianism.

Now, after looking at the matter in this broad way, it is well enough to consider what these two progressively reformative agencies may be said to have accomplished during the comparatively brief period covered by their activity. Limitations of space forbid an elaborate discussion, but I may at least mention, under a few counts, the main results which they have helped conspicuously to achieve.

1. Smallest among these has been the upbuilding of a denomination or church in each

case. It was not the intention or desire of their friends in the beginning to form a new sect in either instance; rather did they hope that their views would win acceptance in the established churches, as Jesus hoped that his teachings would do in the Jewish Church of his day, and as many of the Christian Scientists at first preferred regarding the adoption of their ideas by the older Christian bodies of our own time. Hence the work of Universalists and Unitarians has been predominantly missionary, that is, the work of seed-sowing, through itinerant preaching and the distribution of literature; and it is only within the last half-century that they have seriously undertaken the development of an institutional life, while it is only about twenty-five or thirty years since they began to apply themselves energetically to the task of planting churches and pushing the growth of the various denominational interests. As it is, the organized agencies which these two communions now have are certainly creditable, and have been so wisely formed as to be susceptible of expansion without disruption, — a point of very great advantage. What their total assets are I need not try to tell, for

all such information may be gleaned from the year-books; but I will simply remark that the two denominations are quite as well equipped for earnest work, in proportion to their size, as they could be reasonably expected to become under all the circumstances.

2. More important has been their contribution to the victory of the great principle of intellectual freedom in religion, as opposed to the principle of authority. You know how the authority of the Hierarchy among Roman Catholics, and the authority of the Bible among Orthodox Protestants, and the vague but potent authority of antiquity and of dogmatic systems among people in general, have played an immense rôle in modern Christian history. No doubt all this involves a large element of value; but unchecked it becomes a huge evil. Against this Universalism and Unitarianism have waged a stubborn fight, contending valiantly for the right of each human soul to the fullest exercise of reason and liberty in matters of religious thought, belief, and worship. They have been charged with undue rationalism and independence because of this contention, and perhaps there is a degree of

justice in the charge — which is not strange; but these boons that they have helped to win for the whole world are of unspeakable worth, and some slight excesses in their use are pardonable and may be safely left to self-rectification.

3. Still more important is the better conception of the character of God and of human nature which they have done much to inculcate. God and man are the two principal terms in all systems of religious teaching, and what one thinks of these must shape mainly his thought upon every related subject. The Calvinistic idea of the Divine Being was that of an infinite Autocrat, omnipotent and implacable; while its notion of man was that of a creature totally corrupt and incapable of any self-attainment of virtue, lying under sentence of condemnation from this Deity to everlasting torment. To such extremes were men carried in their overemphasis of the sovereignty of God and of the sinfulness of mankind! Logic is merciless when enlisted in the service of merciless schemes. But against these views Universalism and Unitarianism have waged incessant war, denouncing them as unreasonable, un-Christian, and inhuman; and,

on the other hand, they have advocated the exalted and loving conceptions of both God and man which Jesus Christ inculcated, — of God as the Heavenly Father of all the children of men, and of each human soul as precious beyond compare in His sight, and capable of the free imitation of His own benevolent spirit. By so doing they have helped mightily to break down a hard, narrow, false theological system that was well-nigh complete in its ascendency in America, and have exerted a more potent influence than any other agency perhaps to emancipate the human soul and all the spiritual interests of modern civilization from its terrible constriction. With a loftier vision of God and a nobler appreciation of man, Christian theology and philanthropy are now ready to go forward in a larger and fairer development than any age has witnessed since the days of Christ and the apostles.

4. Lastly, Universalism and Unitarianism have been leading forces in effecting a general reconstruction of thought on nearly all other phases of Christian doctrine, — touching the nature and office of Christ, the interpretation and value of the Bible, the function of the Church

and the meaning of its ordinances, the reality about sin and its consequences, the importance of morality alike to religion and to social welfare, and the brighter outlook heavenward for the human soul. Slowly and carefully they have wrought out sound views regarding these various problems connected with the personal religious life, and they are ready at any moment to hold them up to the light for the critical inspection of all concerned. They may fairly claim to have co-ordinated knowledge and reverence, science and faith, uncompromising reason and vital religion, more completely than any other considerable portion of modern Christendom. Besides, they have steadfastly kept the way open for progress, and have thoroughly learned to expect further advancement to be made in a knowledge of the divine glories of the universe. They will doubtless continue to labor for a still better understanding of Christianity, and to look for light everywhere, and to receive it gladly whensoever it may break forth. They listen reverently to the voice of science, the message of philosophy, the song of the poet, and the hymn or prayer of every religious system on earth; but most of all

they hearken to the whisper of the Divine Spirit in the inmost soul, bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, — "and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ."

Thus, in this fourfold way, Universalism and Unitarianism have rendered an immense service in helping to batter down the barriers to religious progress, and to give the world a purer type of Christianity, — clarified, verified, rationalized, and spiritualized. If truth is the most precious possession of the human mind, and must underlie all its permanent achievements, the value of this great influence which they have exerted — whatever may have been the shortcomings of the denominational bodies representing it — must prove in the long run to be of the largest measure for all the interests of our Christian civilization.

But I shall not do my whole duty unless I point out, justly though briefly, the limitations that still characterize these important developments.

1. I must mention the excess of iconoclastic and negative work. This is the fault, perhaps,

which their critics notice first, and which therefore may be regarded as most conspicuous. But it was inevitable and has been merely incidental. Movements, like men, have the defects of their virtues. It is needful that they should be strong in certain respects, in order to do a powerful work; but it is easy to go to an extreme in the exercise of their strength. Universalism and Unitarianism had to be destructive at first and for a long time, and it was quite natural that they should keep up the habit of antagonizing and demolishing error, even after its dominion was effectually broken. Such an excess of the critical quality, however, is unquestionably a weakness. People are not helped much by fault-finding and negation; what they chiefly need is positive, constructive, progressive leadership along all good lines; and the first call of duty to Universalism and Unitarianism to-day is to *rise up and go forward*, — to take the ground which they have helped to clear of weeds and brambles, and to produce thereupon the beautiful fruits of the Spirit in great abundance. The religious world waits for this nobler result, as the consummation and justification of all that has gone before.

2. Akin to this defect has been an over-emphasis of the intellectual element in religion. This, likewise, was inevitable because men had repudiated the claims of reason to be heard in the court of divine justice, and nothing short of an urgent assertion of its rights could effect their recognition. But it has been an incidental failing, which will be corrected because the human soul is not all intellect, and the intellect is not even the chief avenue by which divine truth is apprehended. Reason has its place in religion, and henceforth is bound to be acknowledged; but other voices are to be heard also, and may tell as much of God and all spiritual interests as the intellectual faculty. So I feel sure that the second lesson which Universalism and Unitarianism need to learn and heed to-day is to pay more attention to the intuitions, the feelings, the spiritual affections, and the great ethical forces, that testify of holy virtues, aspirations, and sanctions, by which the human soul may mount up with wings as eagles, may run and not be weary, may walk and not faint.

3. Another defect has been the narrowing influence of denominationalism and boasted "liber-

alism." All sects limit, more or less, the range of people's thought and sympathy. Some one has said that when you build a fence, you fence out more than you fence in. The moment you establish a new denomination, that moment you begin to ask men to be earnestly devoted to its interests, and then you begin to magnify them, and then you lose sight of all other interests. It is one of the prices we have to pay for organization that the administration of its affairs consumes much valuable talent, often engrossing labor and love which ought to go to higher things. Thus it comes to pass that people sometimes find themselves "all wrapped up" in their own church, forgetting that at best it is only one branch of a great, spreading Vine; and not infrequently a spirit of pride takes possession of them, and conceit closes up the way to further progress. Universalism and Unitarianism have done their full share of boasting over their "liberal" thought, their "progressive" character, and will do well now to cease glorying, and simply go to work as earnestly as possible to put their great gospel at the service of mankind in all lowly, Christ-like ways. Then they will

broaden out to sympathize with every other movement that seeks in a similar spirit to follow the same Master.

4. This leads me to say that still another limitation in Universalism and Unitarianism is the lack of an ardent devotion to the personal leadership of Jesus Christ. In discarding the trinitarian view of his nature, which deifies him, and in adopting the humanitarian view, as has been done in some cases partially and in other cases — perhaps now in most — entirely, there has been an incidental loss of a certain reverent regard for his personal character, as well as for his supposed official position. This loss has been, indeed, a gain in so far as that reverence was false because based upon an erroneous conception, — and such was the case to a very great extent; but the loss has been absolute in so far as it has diminished our appreciation of the spiritual beauty and supremacy of that Peerless Teacher who called himself the Son of Man and who has been so truly the Light of the religious world. Perhaps this loss has not been so general as, to unfriendly eyes, it may have seemed; and certainly one may not find in all Christian liter-

ature more affectionate expressions of allegiance and attachment to Jesus of Nazareth than have fallen from the lips of some who have been foremost in claiming that he was strictly and only a human being.[1] This fact shows that such an esteem — warm, loving, all-controlling — is wholly compatible with the theory that makes him simply one of God's human agents, although gladly acknowledged as the Chief among them all, for the spiritual education of mankind; and my point is that just this esteem, this fervent honor and devotion, is precisely the result which Universalism and Unitarianism have been somewhat in danger of missing in the individual disciple, and which therefore they need especially to be careful to secure. The Christian world waits for this demonstration, and it will be increasingly afforded. For it will be more and more clearly seen that Jesus was none other than a great historical Exponent of that high and pure spiritual religion which is ultimately possible to all men; that as such he is indeed the Spiritual Leader and Teacher of the ages, whose example

[1] *E. g.* Theodore Parker, as see J. W. Chadwick's biography.

is incalculably precious to us ; that the conceptions which he entertained, and the faith which he cherished, and the holy spirit which animated him may be ours if we seek earnestly to attain them, as he shows us how ; that we are saved out of spiritual ignorance, out of sin, out of all manner of evil, by thus learning of him, appropriating his help, and following "in his steps ;" and that the highest proof of our loyal love to him consists in our faithful endeavor to obey "the law of the spirit of life" which he so perfectly manifested, — as Whittier has admirably indicated in the familiar lines, —

> "Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
> What may thy service be ?
> Nor name, nor sign, nor ritual word,
> But simply following thee."

I am sure that one of the specific functions of Universalism and Unitarianism to-day is to show the world how easily possible, how natural and perfectly consistent it is, to hold strictly to the humanitarian conception of the *nature* of Jesus, and yet to acknowledge his spiritual greatness, and, therefore, to *accept* him as the Religious

Teacher for the individual soul, for society at large, and for all the nations of the earth. Such a conception *of* him, joined with such a feeling *toward* him and such an allegiance *to* him, cannot fail to commend itself to the growing intelligence of mankind, or to exert a most sweet and elevating influence upon the whole religious life of our age.

5. I should like to say something about one further limitation in Universalism and Unitarianism, namely, the want of adequate zeal in practical Christian work, — in missions, in social service, and in reform. But their records in this respect are not seriously discreditable when all things are fairly considered; and, moreover, their shortcomings in these matters, whatever they may have been, are beginning to be overcome. Therefore I will merely remark that another distinct call of Duty to these two progressive movements at present is to *go on* in this pathway to make their enlightened thought and their religious convictions efficient for the uplifting of mankind in all wise, earnest, and loving ways. For it is the business of every Christian church to be, not only a communion of saints, or a form

of expression for a common religious spirit, but also an instrument for righteousness, for social betterment, for the perfection of the race, — in short, for the full establishment of the kingdom of God on earth; and no movement in the realm of ideas regarding religion can find adequate justification, from the Christian point of view, unless and until it eventuate in some such practical ministry. I am confident that Universalism and Unitarianism should and will thoroughly learn this great lesson.

Now I have left myself scant space for glancing at the outlook for these two significant phases of modern spiritual progress. But perhaps it will suffice if I sum up my thought in a single sentence, by saying that the past has been but a preparation; that the present age demands just such an enlightened and beautiful gospel as these denominational movements have to offer; that already its essential principles and spirit are very widely accepted, even though neither of the names designating it be acknowledged; and that it may very well happen that the communions which have wrought out these nobler views of divine things shall become larger instrumental-

ities for their promulgation, in the next fifty or one hundred years, than we can now foresee.

The only other development in the modern religious world that seems to me — considering its profound and wide-reaching influence — at all comparable in importance to the one herein sketched is Congregationalism. But we are to remember that the history of Congregationalism covers not less than three centuries; and that, while its fundamental principles, its inherent aim, and its social bearing have remained practically unchanged from the beginning, yet its doctrinal interpretation of Christianity and certain aspects of its *theory* of Christian society have broadened greatly, and so have altered very much its surface character; while, furthermore, over half of its numerical growth has occurred within the last seventy-five years.[1] Who shall say what even a single century more will do for Universalism and Unitarianism, as they build upon the ample basis which has now been laid for them, and labor with the wisdom and consecration which they are at length beginning to manifest? Perhaps they can never be zealous in any form of proselyt-

[1] I refer mainly to American Congregationalism.

ism, or ambitious for any kind of mere institutional prosperity; but there is abundant reason to hope that they will continue to be high-minded teachers of the truth and lowly, loving helpers of mankind. Is there really any nobler mission for them to fulfil?

CURRENT ETHICAL STANDARDS AND THE NEEDED MORAL EMPHASIS IN RELIGIOUS TEACHING.

CURRENT ETHICAL STANDARDS AND THE NEEDED MORAL EMPHASIS IN RELIGIOUS TEACHING.

NE of the encouraging signs of our time is the growth of moral sensitiveness. Along with the remarkable advances which have been made, during the century just passed, in material, intellectual, and religious ways, and in politics, philanthropy, and science, there has been a corresponding progress in the ethical direction. This assertion may be questioned; and of course, like all general statements respecting human affairs, it is subject to some qualifications; but I think that, on the whole, it is warranted by a broad review of the facts. Let us consider briefly what has taken place in four important particulars.

1. There has been a distinct moralizing of *religion*. This may seem like an odd remark. A moment's reflection, however, will show that religion is often one thing, and morality is quite

another thing. The primary expression of religion is worship in some form, and worship usually has to do with rites and ceremonies which imply attitudes and relations to the deity or deities. The strictly religious man, therefore, is he who faithfully performs these, who punctually observes times and seasons, who scrupulously complies with the rules and regulations regarded as essential to the securing of the Divine favor. But it is evident that there is no necessary connection between these duties and those moral obligations which the common conscience of mankind indicates that people owe to one another. A person may be extremely solicitous about the disposition of the gods toward him, and may offer costly sacrifices, make long prayers, hold elaborate festivals, or go on extended pilgrimages, in order to placate their wrath, do them suitable honor, and obtain their gracious assistance, without ever thinking of being honest, just, kind, and helpful toward his fellow-men. So it has happened that, in the vast majority of cases throughout the world, among savages and pagans, among Orientals and barbarians, and even among many Christians, religion has

been neither moral nor immoral, but simply unmoral.

Now it is one of the great excellencies — I sometimes think it is the very greatest of all the excellencies — of both Judaism and Christianity, in their pure and legitimate state, that they are profoundly and vitally moral. The ethical quality is not only conspicuous in them, but it dominates them. Righteousness is a living reality in them; the highest duty a man owes to God, according to their teachings, is to deal justly and lovingly with all other men; and the truest worship we can offer to the Father is the pure incense of a heart that is quick with the spirit of uprightness and compassion toward His needy children. This lofty conception appears upon the pages of both the Old and the New Testaments, and its exemplification by the prophets and apostles, and especially by the Son of Man, as well as by the early churches, constitutes the noblest lesson which the spiritual genius of the Israelites has given to the world.

But, unfortunately, the readers of the Bible and the followers of Christ have not always learned this lesson. They have often separated

the two things which Jesus made one, — morality and religion, — calling the former "filthy rags" in comparison with the latter; insisting upon rites and ceremonies, institutions and dogmas, but neglecting justice and mercy; being particular about prayers and penances, fasts and sacrifices, but not hesitating to strive and fight, to lie and cheat, to be drunken and licentious. Thus it came to pass, a hundred years ago, that religion, in both England and America, was dogmatic and ecclesiastical enough, but far from being as moral as it ought. But during the nineteenth century the great lesson has been much more thoroughly learned than ever before, — though of course it has been diligently inculcated, here and there, during all the Christian centuries, in spite of gross errors and practices, — that religion, according to the teaching of the Bible and especially of Jesus Christ, is radically and unequivocally moral; that no man is truly religious, in the Christian sense, who is not first of all a good man, — honest, just, kind; and that our chief business as followers of the Nazarene is to make righteousness and love to prevail here in this world by living righteously and lovingly

ourselves. Therefore the Christianity of our day is a more definitely and earnestly *moral* type of Christianity than that of former times. The ethical note sounds mightily through all the best preaching of this generation; and the churches, in spite of all their shortcomings, are more surely than ever the bulwarks of righteousness in private and public life. The development, no doubt, needs to go much further; but the fact that it has already gone so far is one of the most gratifying features of our present spiritual tendency. *The moralizing of religion means the ultimate moralizing of our whole civilization.*

2. Side by side with this, there has been a similar movement in *philanthropy.* Charity has become not only wiser, but more just, — not less sentimental, in a true way, but more serious. Instead of mere alms-giving, prompted by the impulse of pity, and subject to the fluctuations of feeling, it has become the careful study of the real needs of the dependent classes, based upon an intelligent recognition of the *obligation* of those that are strong to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves. The

force of this obligation is now felt to be very great, and its appreciation is spreading rapidly and widely in modern society. Under its influence we are learning that even the weakest and the wickedest have rights, and that the thing which must be done for them is simply the right thing, — not the convenient or the expedient thing merely, but rather that which the Christian conscience pronounces *right*. The convenient or expedient thing might be to kill murderers, lunatics, and fools; but this would be wrong, and morality bids us do a very different thing with them. Thus the voice of morality dictates in modern philanthropy, in all its phases; and it is not too much to say that ethical considerations are supreme in these noble concerns. It was really the ethical passion, the resolute voice of the moral law, that was the most potent factor in the abolition of slavery; and it will eventually abolish all other gigantic iniquities by its slow but sure increase of power in men's hearts. Every great reform is at bottom a moral reform; every great humanitarian enterprise is an aspect of the warfare between right and wrong; and in the last analysis it is the determination of

the right that will carry the day for benevolence against all evil.

3. Likewise there has been a marked moralization of *education*. Not very long ago it was popularly supposed that, if children were only taught to read, write, and cipher, so that all might be intellectually enlightened, the world would be shortly redeemed. Teach every boy a trade, and put a book into his hands, and the republic would be safe. But to-day every thoughtful person sees that the ability to read is no guaranty that one will read what is good; that the ability to write does not necessarily insure a man against committing forgery; that the ability to cipher is not a proof against dishonest book-keeping. In other words, the moral element in education is vastly more important than was formerly imagined, — indeed, in its social bearings, it is perhaps the very most vital and substantial element; for we can never have a good government until we have good citizens, and we cannot have good citizens until we have good men. So at present, in the educational world, morality is being insisted upon as never before; teachers must be, not only scholars and

trained, but worthy examples in conduct and character; no dishonest, cruel, ugly man or woman will be tolerated in any good school; and by every influence the moral impulses and aspirations of the pupils are quickened and reinforced, and lofty ideals are held before them. Religion may not be taught in its entirety in our schools; but this noble half of religion, this foundation for all else that is true and beautiful in religious character, is being earnestly emphasized and promises untold benefits. For when the teachings of both the churches and the schools become thoroughly ethical, we shall have set at work the most constructive of all agencies except the home to build up in righteousness the fabric of our social and national life.

4. Once more, there has begun to be at length a corresponding moralization of *industry*. Less than fifty years ago the prevalent conception of labor among political economists was that it was a mere commodity, to be bought and sold in the so-called labor market for what it would bring according to the laws of supply and demand. This idea is still far from being outgrown, as current events from time to time painfully re-

mind us. And yet it has really begun to disappear, here and there, before the truer, juster notion that a working-man is a working *man;* that he is not a machine or a chattel, but a human being with a soul as full of desires, ambitions, hopes, fears, affections, and ideals as any other man's soul; that therefore human considerations count with him, and must be reckoned with by his employer; that he wants not merely his wages, but some fair chance to be a man and to be treated in a manly fashion; and that he is ready to respond to such treatment as quickly as anybody else, becoming a better workman by as much as he becomes a better man. Accordingly progressive employers are beginning to invest in the manhood of their employés by providing for them better dwellings, beautiful surroundings, sanitary conditions for their labor, opportunities for improvement and enjoyment, and inducements to strive for excellence in their work.[1] All this pays, for both sides, in every sense; but, more than that, it is a frank and practical recognition of the mutual obligations,

[1] See reports of Mr. W. H. Tolman's exhibit at the Paris Exposition, 1900, for the League for Social Service, New York.

the interdependence, of human beings who are brothers. As such it marks the beginning of that new and higher order of industrial society which will gradually supersede our present order, where suspicion, selfishness, and strife so often lurk, by bringing in the era of reasonable and fraternal co-operation and consequent participation in the prosperity that comes where capital, talent, and labor are harnessed together in the grand business of producing, not only material commodities, but also contentment and peace.

Such, then, is the four-fold moralization which, I think, has unquestionably taken place during the nineteenth century, — in religion, in philanthropy, in education, and in industry. Of course the development cannot be marked off by any periods of time, neither can it be exactly gauged; but it is gratifying to be able to discern, even in the most general way, a progress in these vital interests which may be considered as prophetic of undreamed results yet to be accomplished.

Nevertheless we must not be unduly elated by the encouragements thus derived. Evil

enough remains to subdue our gratification. Morality is yet far from being what it ought to be among us. Our ethical standards are still low in many respects, and our ethical conduct does not come anywhere near a realization of our ideals. I venture to indicate in the briefest way some of the more prominent defects in our prevalent moral conceptions and practices.

1. It can hardly be denied that we are unduly subject to the influence of wealth. Large allowances are to be made for this fact. We in America are living in a new and marvellously rich country, of enormous area and exhaustless resources; we have passed through an era of wonderful inventions for developing all this latent wealth; and comforts and luxuries are made more abundant now than in any preceding age. Great fortunes have become numerous — it is the day of the "multi-millionaire;" the power of money is seen on every hand; and the opportunities for money-making are doubtless larger than ever before. It is scarcely surprising, therefore, that multitudes of people are enamored of riches, and that among the thousands who possess them a considerable number make fools

of themselves, while as many more who have them not are equally foolish in aping the other fools.

Nevertheless it is a distinct defect in a people's life when wealth is over-esteemed; when the supreme object of existence is to make money; when men and women gloat over the mere fact of possession; when they make the most wanton and emulous display of their riches; when intelligence, refinement, true culture, honor, and even religion are considered inferior to the materialism of sordid gain. No sensible man ever thinks of disputing the value of wealth in its proper place, but its place is not the throne of the human heart. With many of our people, however, it is a veritable Mammon, — ruling over them, and being virtually worshipped by them. It is a crude, coarse, vulgar taste, a sign of moral imperfection, an indication that one has not yet risen much above the instinct of the beast, when his controlling passion is to get and have, regardless of means. Not until we are "born from above" shall we learn that "man doth not live by bread alone;" not until we perceive the intrinsic worth and dignity of the human

soul, and begin to appreciate most the things which minister to its true development, can we be said to be highly civilized. Then our estimate of men will not depend upon their possession or wanting of material riches; the superb riches of learning, virtue, and true piety will be seen to be far nobler and worthier of our pursuit; and the glory of our civilization will consist in our ability to transmute the wealth of the material world into the treasures of the spiritual kingdom, — knowledge, beauty, love, peace, happiness.

2. Akin to this defect is another which exhibits itself in an over-weening love of notoriety. This is the age of the newspaper, and I sometimes wonder whether the newspaper does not go farther toward making us what we are than either the school or the church. Perhaps not — I think not; indeed, it may be that the newspaper is just a mirror to show us what we are. Be this as it may, it is certain that we are all learning to utilize the newspaper, even if the newspaper does not utilize us. Whenever we do anything of the least importance, in the home, the church, the school, the club, the society, we

straightway hurry a report of it to the daily paper; and that item, when it appears, affords us more complacency than all the kind, loving deeds we have done, in little private ways, for a week! We appear to want to live in the public eye; and the worst of it is that, in our desire to make a good showing, we overstrain the facts and the truth, and thus cultivate a secret dishonesty that reveals a weak spot in the centre of the character.

This may not be a very serious tendency, but we shall do well to resist it. Better let your meeting or essay or social function go unreported than to lie about it, or get the reporter to do so, even to a slight extent. The world will quickly see through your pretence. Be modest, be patient, above all be truthful.

> "Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
> And waste its sweetness on the desert air;"

but let it waste! The earth will swing on in its orbit, the sun will continue to shine, and there will be other flowers after you are gone. Just live and bloom and die, and do not think quite so much about yourself, and let the newspaper

forget that you are in the world. God will not forget, and a little corner that He watches will be sweet with beauty all the same, even if the people do not know.

3. A worse moral defect than either of these is dishonesty; I do not mean so much in regard to veracity and money matters as in regard to trade and workmanship. In ancient Israel there were "false balances," which were considered "an abomination unto the Lord." In our day there are adulterations, in groceries, drugs, paints, whiskies, and what not? The extent to which these concrete lies are carried is appalling, and the discouraging fact about them is that the people are so indifferent to them. Public officials are doing something to expose and check them, but their work should be supplemented by an indignant public sentiment. Every person ought to feel that to cheat a customer by selling him an inferior article when he pays for a good one, is to rob him as literally as to pick his pockets or break open his safe. So it is in the matter of work. The carpenter, mason, or painter who will not do just as good work when it is out of sight, or when the boss is out of sight, as other-

wise is likewise a robber. An honest workman is honest all through and everywhere. Fortunately there are thousands of such, but there are not a few of the other sort.

Now, when trade and workmanship are vitiated by such dishonesty, the trader and the workman are themselves injured in character, and civilization is in that degree built like a house on the sand. The influence of every deed counts somewhere; young people learn from their elders; custom is often more potent than law; and evil practices entail their consequences to far distant generations. We need to learn that righteousness is a very concrete reality; that it is as important to be righteous, that is, just, honest, trustworthy, in our daily work as in our religion on Sunday; and that there can be no true kingdom of heaven on earth until people carry out into all the details of practical conduct the spirit of genuine truthfulness. Our business must be moralized as thoroughly as any other phase of our modern complex life; indeed, because it touches us all, every day, in many ways, affecting our health, our happiness, and the efficiency of our social institutions, we need to be even more particular

about these ordinary aspects of honesty than about some of those remoter interests which often engage our attention.

4. Our ethical standards in political affairs are probably open to severer criticism than anywhere else. True, it is easy to indulge in wholesale denunciation; to charge public officials, right and left, with corruption; to rail at parties, rings, and henchmen, and to blame the politicians for evils that our own neglect of civic duty is chiefly responsible for. Without being guilty of the sin of such unfairness, I think it is indisputable that our prevalent ideals of political virtue are lower than those we cherish for private conduct. We do not, as a people, expect men to apply the same principles to the conduct of the business interests of government, in city, state, or nation, that we apply to the management of our own affairs. For a single example, witness the difficulty with which civil-service reform has made headway. Our politicians generally simply do not believe that men ought to be as well trained, as competent, and as free from political influence for the public service as for posts of responsibility in industrial, mechanical, or com-

mercial pursuits. It is tacitly assumed that almost any one who can get himself elected or appointed is fit to hold office; at least it is thought to be only fair that the successful party shall have the spoils when its turn comes, — all of which means practically that it is considered right or pardonable for a man to cheat the government if he gets a chance.

Then, when we turn to see how jobbery has disgraced our public life at various times, how valuable franchises have been virtually given away for political favors, how the power of money has come to be the great menace in legislation, how the lobbyist is recognized as a legitimate agent for those wanting help from law-making bodies, and how the political boss, with the political machine, has come to be the real governor in our civic affairs, — when we ponder the significance of these facts, and reflect that, as the prophet said in ancient times, "my people love to have it so," we may see the force of the charge that our political ideals are low, our ethical standards for public life are not so true as those we insist upon in private matters. The revelations of corruption in the police de-

partment of New York City, repeatedly made within the last decade, and now[1] more glaringly published than ever before; and the recent disclosures of official treachery in the granting of street railway franchises in Philadelphia,[2] are only extreme instances of the working of an evil spirit that threatens more or less every large city in the land. It is the power which this spirit has already gained among us that has called forth the remark from competent judges, that American municipalities are the worst governed in the world; and it seems certain that here is to be the battle-ground of the immediate future on which the struggle between the public interest and private or corporate greed is to be mainly determined. Who can dream of its being rightly determined without the prevalence among the people of higher ideals of civic virtue than now generally obtain?

5. One more indication of unworthy ethical standards may be seen in a widespread callousness respecting vice and crime, together with an easy-going indifference to the fate of those who

[1] August, 1901.

[2] See "The World's Work," p. 1116, August, 1901.

commit them. Within the last few years how many lynchings, how many burnings at the stake, with horrible mutilations of the wretched victims of mob violence, have occurred, and how slightly these appalling outrages have stirred the indignation of the American people at large! We read of them with startling frequency of late, but where are the signs of any popular protest against them? Indeed, is there not sad reason to fear that they are more than half pardoned by society in general? Again, who has cared very much about the practical disfranchisement of hundreds of thousands of Negroes in the South lately? Still further, who is greatly disturbed by the frightful evils of intemperance; who tries seriously to resist the aggressions of the liquor traffic; who is particularly concerned with the fate of the drunkard, the libertine, or the harlot? We hear men saying, in manner if not in word, "Let them alone; let them indulge their appetites and passions: they will kill themselves and get out of the way so much the sooner: you cannot do anything to reform them or to stop these lines of business."

Such is a hint of the spirit of apathy and

cynicism which one may detect in the attitude and conversation of large numbers of intelligent people to-day with reference to matters which ought to arouse the deepest moral concern. I will not undertake to account for it: perhaps it is partly due to the subtle influence of the evolutionary doctrine of the survival of the fittest, begetting the belief that it is really a good thing to let society rid itself of degenerates; and possibly it is partly due to the growth of the idea that we are a great, expanding, triumphant nation, manifestly destined to become a world-power; and if any inferior individuals or peoples stand in our way, it is to the interest of mankind in general that we should not be deterred by any little scruples from wiping them out, or at least disposing of them to suit ourselves. Be the source of the feeling what it may, I think it unquestionable that it exists; and it indicates a certain deadness of the public conscience that is one of the gravest perils in our present otherwise prosperous civilization. It is not the occurrence of vice, cruelty, and crime that we need most to fear, but rather the nonchalance with which the better classes

of society regard such phenomena. *There* is our danger signal.

Of course the foregoing paragraphs express only my own judgment, and I cannot claim that either my experience or my observation has been large enough to qualify me especially to form a guiding opinion. Let me, however, quote the words of a far more competent judge, who agrees with me that, taking the nineteenth century as whole, there has been a general moral advance, but who sees a marked retrogression during the last twenty-five years. I refer to Mr. Frederick Harrison,[1] who says: —

"I am a convinced believer in the gradual improvement of civilization, when we judge it by areas and epochs sufficiently wide and typical. In all progress there are oscillations, partial degenerations, and local or temporary ailments. But I must profess my conviction — and I hear the same confessed by the best men and women, day by day — that our immediate generation has been sinking of late to meaner ideals, to coarser ways of life, to more vulgar

[1] "Christianity at the Grave of the Nineteenth Century," in the *North American Review*, December, 1900.

types of literature and art, to more open craving after wealth, and a more insolent assertion of pride and force."[1]

Now, if the description of our current ethical standards herewith given is fairly accurate, — and I think it wholly within the bounds of the truth in the case, — we are brought face to face with a most serious business for the teachers of religion. Recollecting that Christianity as Jesus Christ inculcated it contemplates the welfare of the race, and that it is fundamentally and vitally an ethical religion, never divorcing morality from worship, but making love to man equal co-partner with love to God, we can see at once these two dominant facts: First, that there can be no genuine development of our civilization that does not include the legitimate sway of the moral spirit; and, second, that, if the Christian churches have any high mission to fulfil at present, it is to be the exponents of true ethical principles and ideals, however they may insist upon the interests of worship and theology.

[1] Mr. Harrison's entire article portrays the features and causes of this decline, and may fitly supplement what I have said by affording a wider view than I have sought to take.

1. It ought not to require argument in these days to show that no race can keep itself from decay that degenerates morally. Yet we need to drive this truth home just now with all the force at our command; for the present generation, though perhaps assenting to it theoretically, does not adequately *feel* it. The great lesson of history must be taught anew, and ever anew, namely, that righteousness is the only solid foundation upon which any individual or nation can build. A man may have health, riches, power, learning and skill; but if he be not virtuous, that is, honest and pure, he will sooner or later come to grief. Dishonesty, intemperance, and licentiousness will quickly eat the vitals out of any person's seeming prosperity; there is no such thing as permanent success for one who continually violates the moral law. So it is with nations. Vice, corruption, unrighteousness in any form, if widespread and persistent, will bring any race, any government, any civilization, to ruin. We Americans must understand that numbers, power, wealth, intelligence, skill, even liberty and religion, or all these combined, cannot save us without morality; and if the spirit of righteous-

ness be not kept supreme in the hearts of our people, nothing can insure the perpetuity of our beneficent institutions. These would be trite and impertinent remarks if they were not so sorely needed by the youth of the land.

It is of the utmost importance that we should clearly recognize the defects in our present moral life, both public and private. We are confronting new and momentous questions. The industrial and economic developments of the last quarter of a century, together with the issues of our own recent war, and the events transpiring in remote parts of the world, have suddenly thrust upon us some of the most radical and difficult problems ever devolved upon a people for solution. Nearly all these problems, whether domestic or foreign, involve great moral principles, — questions of right and wrong, the interests of justice as between man and man, between class and class, between nation and nation. Is it not plain that we cannot hope to deal successfully with any of these vast, concrete problems until we purify and rectify our moral vision? Unless we are able to see straight along moral lines, unless our ethical conceptions are clear

and sound, unless we recognize the binding force of the moral law in all our conduct, in all our relations, and therefore enthrone righteousness in our own hearts, how shall we presume to establish it in politics, industry, commerce, and our dealings with the subject peoples to whom the course of events has carried our government? Hence I urge that no more serious task awaits us to-day than to moralize the ideals of our people. We must outgrow our ethical adolescence. We must make our virtue commensurate with our development in other respects. Our problems at the opening of the new century are mainly moral problems; our dangers are chiefly moral dangers; the principal strain upon our civilization is a moral strain; and the largest factor in our equipment for meeting the new emergencies is the thorough moral education of our people, the vital reinforcement of the ethical spirit in all ranks of society.

2. Here is a great task for the Christian churches. They are the purveyors of a form of religious teaching which includes morality as at least one-half of its life-giving message. But

they have not adequately emphasized that half. They have been occupied mainly with ecclesiastical, dogmatic, and devotional interests. Perhaps these things they ought to have done, but certainly they ought not to have left the other undone. Unhappily the sway of the Augustinian-Calvinistic theology has tended distinctly to depreciate morality; and we must now begin to undo this mischief by insisting that morality is the very foundation of a true religious life, — not the superstructure, indeed, but assuredly the foundation. The churches themselves must first recognize this grand truth, and then in their religious teaching they must duly explicate the moral bearings of the gospel of Jesus Christ. From the pulpit, in the Sunday-school, and in the various minor gatherings of the people for instruction or inspiration, the vital, ethical implications of essential Christianity must be clearly and earnestly unfolded. What an opportunity is here to educate the nation, to mould somewhat the character of the rising generation! No other institution among us has a better chance. One-fifth of the people are directly reached by the churches; everybody expects

them to be moral guides; and they can drive home the great principles of righteousness with all the power of the holiest sanctions which the human soul ever acknowledges. Surely their responsibility is a solemn one. If they do not do this ethical work, where shall we look for its performance? Let every home, every school, every other agency join in it; yet all that the churches can do to help is most sorely needed if we are to balance our material and intellectual development by an adequate moral development.

We frequently hear it suggested that the churches need a revival. I think the kind of revival they most need to-day is an ethical revival. There is a widely extended æsthetic revival taking place, as we may see in the growth of ritualism, and the observance of religious festivals, and all the adornments of worship; and there are waves of devotionalism sweeping over the churches every now and then. What the Christian people of our time need most profoundly to feel is their moral responsibility for the welfare of society and the full establishment of righteousness in the earth. Until they do this, their æstheticism and their

fervent piety will have little value. Unless Christianity, working through the Christian people, can somehow show itself able to cope with the concrete and mighty evils of our age, — war, intemperance, licentiousness, dishonesty, political corruption, the unjust aggressions of class against class, nation against nation, — how shall any man dare to stand up and say with St. Paul, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth"?

The call of the Spirit of Jesus Christ to the people of the churches to-day is a call to a sterner moral conflict than they have engaged in for many a year, that religion may prove itself an ethical force, that Christian citizenship may be something more than a name, and that our civilization may be established and built up on the everlasting foundation of RIGHTEOUSNESS.

THE SPIRITUAL ELEMENT IN SOCIAL SERVICE.

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ODERN philanthropy is a tree of life that has grown to very large proportions. It strikes its roots deep into the soil of human nature and history; it bears a great variety of fruits; and its leaves are at least meant to be for the healing of the nations. To see how it has developed, why it flourishes, and what is its value, may help us to understand some of the larger meanings of the social phenomena of our time, may indicate in part the social function of religion, and may tend to co-ordinate our diverse endeavors to benefit the world.

I think the most significant fact in the progress of civilization is the growing appreciation of human worth. Through the long ages man has been slowly but surely rising in his own estimation. Despite all pessimistic philosophies, he thinks more highly of himself to-day than ever before. He has come to a fuller consciousness

of his own inherent dignity, he understands himself better, he respects himself more, he trusts himself further, than at any previous time. This is true, not only of an elect few, but of a rapidly increasing multitude of the so-called common people. Notwithstanding the hard conditions under which they maintain their existence, and the bitterness with which they sometimes complain about them, they really believe in the intrinsic value of the human soul, in the essential sacredness of life, and in the possibility of both individual and social improvement. Indeed, the very dissatisfaction with their lot which they so often keenly feel is a living witness to their profound conviction that human nature is worthy of something better. I know of nothing in the life of the vast masses of mankind that is at once more pathetic and more hopeful than the patience with which they endure *what is* and the tenacity with which they cling to the idea of *what ought to be.* That notion of "what ought to be" is a proof that our race has an instinctive sense of the important place, the honorable rank, which it occupies in the scale of nature; and the growth of this feeling into a clear and

strong conception is the promise and potency of the greater advancement which it is yet to achieve in trying to make the world a paradise.

If we seek the causes of this increasing appreciation of human worth, we shall doubtless find them to be many. Professor Henry S. Nash, in one of his vigorous books,[1] shows that the civilization of the Græco-Roman world contributed very much to the development of the spirit of individualism by breaking the tyranny of antiquity through philosophy and law; but that it lacked the power to drive home this spirit to "the downmost man," as he calls him. Then he shows that Christianity, inheriting and embodying Semitic conceptions, reinforced and supplemented this process with sufficient might to do just this thing, — to carry the sense of the worth of the individual man "down through the lowest stratum of society." Thereupon arose the social problem which has engaged the Western world ever since, — the problem of equality, liberty, and fraternity. Through terrible ordeals of strife and suffering these great principles have been wrought out and established in religion,

[1] Genesis of the Social Conscience.

government, education, and industry; and the stupendous work is not yet finished.

I believe Professor Nash is right in ascribing such a degree of importance to the influence of Christianity in propagating the truth of man's inherent worth. By proclaiming with passionate earnestness the existence of one only and true God, the God of righteousness and love, the Father of the spirits of all flesh, who cared enough for even the very weakest and wickedest of men to provide for their eternal salvation, this form of religious teaching brought to the most abject people an overwhelming sense of the preciousness of the human soul, which inspired them with dignity and hope, with fortitude and patience, with gratitude and consecration. By declaring that God had "concluded all in unbelief that he might have mercy upon all," this gospel wiped out the old baneful distinctions between Jew and Gentile, between male and female, between master and slave; and it was so effectual in this work that it made these classes, who had hated or despised one another, sit down together at the communion table and learn to love one another. The marvel-

lous grace manifested in this spiritual dispensation begat a reciprocal goodness in all hearts that felt its power; the sense of sin and the sense of Divine forgiveness melted all souls; and an unwonted tenderness, sympathy, and helpfulness spang up spontaneously throughout the Christian society.

These facts give us a hint of the spiritual forces which were set at work in social directions by primitive Christianity. Their influence has been operative ever since. Conjoined with much that was good in paganism, and later on with the genius of the Teutonic people for liberty, they have wrought steadily for the elevation of the multitude, for the removal of artificial barriers, for the abrogation of special privileges to the few, and for the extension of the fruits of civilization to the many. Thus helping the common individual man to higher attainments, Christianity has crowned him with glory and honor by making him feel himself a child of God, immortal and of unspeakable worth. Other factors have contributed to the same result, — notably education, and the gradual conquest of material nature; but I do not see how we can fail to assign a very important rôle to the Christian re-

ligion in effecting the enhancement of all human values.

Now, there are three practical and significant bearings of this great fact that man has grown in worth so strikingly and esteems himself more highly to-day than ever before.

1. It lays a basis for the establishment of human rights; or, if it does not lay that basis, it strengthens it. If a man does not think much of himself, he will not claim much for himself. If he thinks of himself as a beast, the things of a beast will satisfy him; but if he thinks of himself as a child of God, made to live and grow forever, only those things which minister to the nobler side of his nature can be adequate to his needs. These things, he instinctively feels, really belong to him; he deserves them; he is worthy of them; he ought to have them; they become *his rights.* Then he demands them, then he fights for them, then he gets them — if he fights long and hard enough. Thus liberty, property, and political prerogatives are won by strenuous endeavor, often being forcibly wrested from the hands that wrongfully hold and withhold them. As the English people wrested their Great Char-

ter from King John at Runnymede, so has every man been obliged to struggle in some way for what he himself has acquired and added to the wealth of the world. The ability or disposition to struggle is directly inspired by whatsoever influence, be it Christianity or education or native strength, really makes one conscious of his own inherent dignity and worthiness. If you take a poor dejected slave and teach him that he is a man, a child of God, an heir of immortality; that he is endowed with powers and capacities which fit him for unlimited development; and that, if he will, he may work out for himself a noble destiny, — what must be the effect? Why, if you make him feel deeply the truth of what you say, and if you awaken within him a burning desire and a mighty determination to realize these high possibilities, he will inevitably and immediately want his freedom; and, given his freedom, together with such a desire and determination, he will accomplish through pain and sorrow a grand measure of self-advancement. So it has happened that the growing appreciation of human worth, which Christianity has inculcated and which other influences have con-

firmed, has stimulated men to put forth their best endeavors to appropriate the blessings of freedom, wealth, and culture to which they have felt themselves entitled. "Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak to thee," is the message of the Divine Voice to every human being, calling him to self-respect, to a consciousness of personal dignity, to a longing for his full self-realization; and whenever he hears that call sounding through the chambers of his soul, he begins to lift himself out of the dust, and then he begins to inherit the kingdom prepared for him from the foundation of the world.

2. This awakened or increased sense of human worth lays or strengthens the foundation for social obligation. It makes a man recognize the rights of his fellow-man. Theodore Parker said that democracy means, not merely that I am as good as you are, but also that you are as good as I am. This is what Christianity means, what fraternity means, what humanity means. For the moment you recognize a man *as a man*, as belonging to the human category, that moment you will begin to be driven by an inexorable logic to recognize the fact that

he is entitled to all the natural and inherent rights of mankind. People have sometimes tried to escape this conclusion. Mr. Alexander H. Stephens wrote his inaugural address as Vice-President of the Southern Confederacy to proclaim the doctrine of the inequality of the races; to declare to the world that some portions of the human family are ordained to rule, and some to serve; and thus to justify the institution of African slavery. We have recently heard not a little talk to the same effect with reference to the inhabitants of the various islands that have lately come under American control; and it is an old story as regards the relations, functions, and prerogatives of the sexes. But the "logic of events," which means the tremendous movement of history, has ground and will grind all such arguments to powder. Before the days of the Civil War it was proposed to abolish slavery in this country by buying the slaves. In the midst of the war, Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote: —

> "Pay ransom to the owner,
> And fill the cup to the brim.
> Who is the owner? The slave is owner,
> And ever was. Pay him."

Those four lines punctured the fallacy of the ages, and struck to the heart of the great question of individual rights and social obligation. Whenever you recognize a man as a man, having the same powers and capacities as yourself, you must accord him all those essential rights and privileges which you find indispensable to your own true welfare. An awakened sense of the intrinsic value of the human soul, penetrating all ranks of society, compels such a recognition; and therefore it undoes the democracies of Greece, the empire of Rome, the monarchies of Europe, and the half-formed republic of America, by gradually extending the privileges of the few to become the common property of the many.

Moreover it deserves to be noticed that only such a sense of human worth, compelling such a recognition of manhood, can establish a true sympathy between man and man. Sympathy that rests upon the idea of superiority and inferiority degenerates into pity, which nothing but holy love can save from becoming contempt. But sympathy that rests upon the idea of natural equality, that is, of a common spiritual nature be-

longing to all the children of men, involves the noble element of respect, which redeems all compassion with the spirit of fraternity. The poor man, the sick man, the slave, the drunkard, the criminal, is my fellow-man, my brother-man: therefore there is a natural bond of sympathy between him and me; therefore the consideration which I extend to him must not be condescension or commiseration, but respect for his higher nature — not for what he is, but for what he might be — and a desire to see him realize his nobler possibilities. What shall keep social feeling from degenerating into class feeling, of one kind or another, but the spreading throughout all levels of society of the sense of man's inestimable spiritual worth, which nothing can utterly alienate; and what more mighty to beget and diffuse this conception than the gospel of Jesus Christ? It is a fire which melts all hearts, and burns away all barriers, and fuses all our best feelings into one great, common enthusiasm for humanity.

3. This exalted, spiritualized appreciation of human worth, of the priceless value of every individual life, lays a sure foundation for social

service. It at once makes you and me feel that we ought to help our fellow-men to realize the better life of which they are capable. What else shall do this? What shall justify the words of Jesus, "He that is great among you shall be your minister; and he that is chief among you shall be bond-servant of all"? What shall inspire educated, refined, skilful, loving men and women to *bind themselves out* to the service of the ignorant, the weak, the friendless, the immoral, the criminal members of society? Shall mere pity, or the necessity of self-protection, or even the interest of future generations? I think not. All these considerations must weigh, indeed; but above them all must rise the Christ-like conception of the preciousness of the human soul, — the implicit belief that all these needy children of men are the spiritual children of the living God, our brothers and sisters, whom we are to recognize as such, and to whom our Father bids us go in loving helpfulness, as He is ever coming to us. When we begin to think and feel in this way, we begin to understand and endorse Paul's words, "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities

of the weak, and not to please ourselves; for even Christ pleased not himself." We see that we are set in the world, not to live for ourselves alone, but for all mankind: society means not only advantages, but responsibilities as well; I *am* my brother's keeper to some extent; the wrong which any man does belongs, not to him exclusively, but in some measure also to the social conditions in which the wrongdoer has grown up. We are all tied together like the meshes of a great network; we are all members of one another in the social organism; these members must have a care for one another and serve one another; and nothing that we have is too good for such use, nothing have we that is not required for social service. Thus wealth becomes a trust, learning and skill a talent, and ability of any kind an endowment, all of which are to be employed in the interests of humanity; and no child can be so weak, no woman so sinful, no man so brutal and wicked, as to be, in the Divine sight, unworthy of our help.

There is a picture entitled "The Doctor," by an English artist, Luke Fildes. It represents a

noble physician sitting at the bedside of a sick child, whose life is evidently at a low ebb. The room and its furnishings indicate the humble circumstances of the family. The lamp on the table is so placed and shaded as to illumine the wan face of the little sufferer, while it shows the doctor to be a fine example of the splendid type of manhood which the medical profession so often affords, — mature, intelligent, skilful, with a strong character, and with a deep and tender sympathy held under perfect control. As he sits there, leaning forward and watching with quiet but earnest solicitude the faint symptoms of his patient's condition, we feel sure that, as long as a spark of life is left in the frail body, this great-hearted, able man will do all that human power can do to win back to health the poor little invalid over whom he broods with all his knowledge and love. It is an illustration of what I mean, of what I venture to think Jesus would mean, by social service; the putting of the very highest manhood and womanhood of the nation at the service of the very weakest member of society, — the best teachers in our schools, the best preachers in our pulpits, the

most expert workers in our charitable societies, the highest talent available in our asylums, reformatories, and prisons; and withal it means that every man, according to his ability, shall give himself ungrudgingly to a life of usefulness and social helpfulness.

I think it is very encouraging to see how earnestly the Christian Church in our day is laying this great lesson to heart. To her is committed the oracle of this message for publication, and to her is first assigned the task of exemplifying its truth. She has never entirely forgotten it; but too often she has slighted it, too often she has been prone to think that she was set on earth, not to serve, but to rule mankind. But the spirit of her Founder's teaching is calling her back at present to a thoroughgoing recognition of the fact that her business is to serve, — to serve God by serving His children, by helping the community and the world into the largest and highest life possible; and we may be very sure that the church that does not seek to fulfil such a mission will soon become an anachronism, and will find its candlestick removed out of its place.

Conceding the essential truth of what has been thus far said, — that there has been a growing appreciation of human worth, that the Christian religion has powerfully promoted this growth, and that the spiritual conceptions involved in this development have helped to lay a basis for the establishment of individual rights, have strengthened the foundations of social obligation, and have justified the great principle and duty of social service, — the question next arises: How shall we undertake to help our fellow-men? Admitting the rightfulness of the demand upon us, how shall we meet it? Granting that our task is assigned us of God, how shall we perform it?

It is not my purpose to elaborate the answer, but I must at least state the central and most vital truth which it contains, namely, *That we are to render our best service to our fellow-men by evoking in them the most resolute self-activity of which they are capable.* Not to do things for them, but to help them do things for themselves; not to give them money, but to afford them opportunities for earning money; not to impart information to them, but to teach them

how to acquire knowledge; in a word, not to make them dependent, but to aid them into independence, — this is the great guiding principle for all true philanthropy. Without this principle our philanthropy may do more harm than good, for it violates that fundamental law of nature which ordains incessant and severe struggle as the inexorable condition of all true attainment. The most and best that you and I can do for our brother-man is to be brotherly, to remove hindrances, to open opportunities, to incite him to self-exertion, and to cheer him with the spirit of faith, hope, and love; then he must work out his own salvation with fear and trembling, or there can be no salvation for him. This is what we are learning to do here in America; it is the supreme lesson of democracy as well as of Christianity. This is what we must do for Cuba, Porto Rico, the Philippine Islands, and all the other backward peoples whom we may touch. It is what Booker T. Washington is trying to do for the Negro; it is what we all must seek to do for each one of God's lowly children with whom we come in contact. Thus shall we build securely a higher civilization than the world has yet seen,

in which individualism and socialism shall be harmonized, and the dream of equality shall pass into the glorious reality of fraternity.

"And each shall care for other,
And each to each shall bend,
To the poor a noble brother,
To the good an equal friend." [1]

[1] Ralph Waldo Emerson.

CHRISTIAN CO-OPERATION, OR THE NEW ALIGNMENT OF THE CHURCHES.

CHRISTIAN CO-OPERATION, OR THE NEW ALIGNMENT OF THE CHURCHES.

HE review of spiritual phenomena which has thus far engaged our attention is calculated to show where the nineteenth century has landed us in respect to religious interests. It has been conducted as widely and carefully as possible under the circumstances, with a constant effort to discern by clear insight and just interpretation the better meaning of the great changes and developments which our age has witnessed; and it would seem as if the resulting impression upon our minds must be distinctly encouraging. It has revealed the working efficiency and the permanent supremacy of the vital essentials of Christianity, while proving that its non-essentials and the errors which get attached to it may fall away without harm; and it has renewed our faith in the capacity of the human race for assimilating its increasing acquisitions of knowledge, wealth,

and power, and for transmuting them by a divine alchemy into spiritual gold.

Now, among the various gratifying features which this review discloses, none is more promising perhaps than that which forms the staple of thought for the present chapter. The growth of the spirit of Christian co-operation is one of the striking facts of our day. No other fact indicates more surely the wide difference between the end of the nineteenth century and the end of the eighteenth, as regards religion; and certainly I can think of no other fact that is fuller of hopeful augury for the beginning of the twentieth century. Let us try to see how it has come about.

1. Glancing far backwards once more, and reading history in the light of to-day, we can easily understand now that it was inevitable that there should be an era of sectarian strife. Remember that the ancient Romans had a genius for government, — that they were a mighty, conquering, administrative people, who exemplified the great twofold principle of authority and submission in the establishment and conduct of an all-embracing social order; remember that the

Roman Catholic Church, succeeding to the place of the fallen Empire in the virtual control of Europe, inherited this genius and exemplified it anew in upbuilding the great ecclesiastical fabric whose dominion was unbroken for a thousand years; remember that underneath that fabric lay certain philosophical interpretations of the gospel, which the Roman Church had accepted and which it imposed upon the people, century after century, by the sheer exercise of its tremendous authority; and remember that it was in this way that the dogmatic temper was indelibly stamped upon the rising European nations, and so came to leave its impress upon our whole Western civilization. If therefore we complain of the undue influence of dogmatism in our modern religious life, and mourn the baneful effects of theological controversy during the last three or four hundred years, let us not forget to place the responsibility for it where it belongs, namely, back in the Middle Age, in the soul of the Roman Catholic Church.

You can see that a violent disruption of this dogmatic-ecclesiastical dominion was bound to come soon or late, and we know that it did come

in the form of the Protestant Reformation. But you can see also that the dogmatic spirit, so deeply ingrained in the most sacred thoughts and feelings of the people, could not be eradicated in a day; and we know that it continued to assert itself, in Protestantism as well as in Romanism, and has sadly embittered the Christian history of our part of the world ever since that great crisis. Against this dogmatic spirit — narrow, hard, domineering — the spirit of liberty, which really generated the whole Protestant movement, has had to struggle even down to our own time. Accordingly modern history has been a battle-field whereon has occurred many a conflict of church with church, of system with system, accompanied by division and subdivision, and resulting in confusion, perplexity, and untold sorrow.

But now at length we are nearing the end of this controversial era. The spirit of liberty has won the day in opposition to the spirit of dogmatism. The principle of authority has gone down before the principle of individual rights. Henceforth it is possible for men to think differently on religious questions and still live in

social peace, even within the same church. We have learned the great lesson of religious toleration — or, I prefer to say, the lesson of mutual respect. Thanks to those who have fought this good fight for us, we can agree to disagree, and speak our honest thought, and stand together as fellow-helpers to the truth. So we are reaching the close of this long, painful chapter of sectarian strife, and every generous heart is glad. It had to be written, in tears and blood, and we shall not forget its solemn admonitions; but now we are happy to go on with the new chapter that waits to be written in the new century.

2. Side by side with the waning of these old influences, including both the spirit of dogmatic authority and the spirit of excessive independence which it provoked into opposite assertion, there has taken place a remarkable growth of the idea of universal human brotherhood and of the sense of social interdependence. Travel and commerce have become world-wide; trade tends everywhere to increasing freedom, in spite of reactionary policies; the telegraph and the newspaper have made all the nations of the earth next-door neighbors. Modern business

methods and financial systems are very complicated and delicate, and are wonderfully sensitive to whatever affects confidence between man and man. International relationships and cosmopolitan interests are the dominant notes in the politics of nearly all the leading governments of the world to-day. An enlarged knowledge of the various branches of the human family has confirmed the thought of the solidarity or essential unity of mankind, — so that we can say now, with an intelligence which even St. Paul did not possess, that society is a body of which, "whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or whether one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."

Superadded to these natural forces developing the idea of universal human brotherhood, there has been the explicit teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the same effect. By simply inculcating the exalted and beautiful doctrine of the universal Fatherhood of God, this religion has steadily educated its disciples to a recognition of its great practical corollary in the doctrine that all men are brethren, and therefore should dwell together in a fraternal spirit. Unhappily

these main truths of Christianity have been too often overlooked by those who have magnified other and secondary notions, and so they have not always been duly impressed upon the popular mind; but now at length, as we begin to right ourselves and recover our true bearings, we are beginning to perceive the vastness and the wide application of this twofold spiritual postulate of the Divine Paternity and the universal human fraternity. And, as might be expected, the Christian Church itself, teaching this comprehensive and fundamental lesson, is among the first to begin to feel its force; and so we are seeing, in all its branches, the blossoming of this blessed and promising thought, that we are all one, since we all have one Father, since one God hath created us, and therefore all artificial distinctions must be obliterated in our treatment of one another.

Meanwhile the new science of sociology, bringing up from the depths of our common life a multitude of facts, and interpreting them in the light of the fullest knowledge, is corroborating and emphasizing this whole grand conception of social interdependence and social responsibility.

Thus we stand on the threshold of the twentieth century equipped with a mighty working truth which Christendom has scarcely appreciated so fully since the days of the apostles.

3. Another set of facts has driven thoughtful Christians to a serious study of the evils of competition. Under the influence of the controversial spirit not only have sects multiplied, but churches of each sect have multiplied also. As a result, our villages and cities have been crowded with small, feeble, inefficient churches, that have been located without much reference to one another, and have labored quite independently of one another. Indeed, in far too many instances they have actually rivalled one another, not in seeking to serve the community, but in striving to get one another's members. While proselytism is not so common in our day as it has been in some other eras, still how frequently we detect a note of jubilation among the people of a given church when a person from another church comes among them! They are glad even to take the children from another Sunday-school, and in fact will send the minister and the superintendent and the calling committee after them

upon the slightest pretext. To such lengths does the spirit of church competition carry good people; and how humiliating is the spectacle to a large-minded man!

Sensible people are getting weary of all this folly. They see what an enormous waste of energy, material and spiritual, accrues from the incessant struggle to plant and maintain a multitude of little, weak, rival churches throughout this country. Not only the new towns of the West, but the older hamlets of the East bear witness to this unwisdom and prodigality in either an excessive supply of churches that do manage to live somehow, or in one or more that have died in the struggle for existence. And in nearly all our large cities the multiplicity of such small churches, each hoping of course to become large, has kept a pretty close pace with the growth of population, — so that our cities, as well as our villages, are overstocked with feeble, competing churches, consuming more of the people's substance than ought to be required to carry on the work of Christianity in the world.

But the worst aspect of the matter is the failure of all these churches to cultivate the

social field thoroughly. Notwithstanding their number, variety, and large expenditures, they do not reach and help the people as they should. Thousands upon thousands are overlooked; a considerable percentage even of those who are enrolled as members of one or another church, or who are nominal sympathizers with some phase of Christianity, are not effectually reached; and evils of the most deadly character — saloons, gambling-dens, houses of infamy — spring up in the very midst of these agencies, and flourish like noxious weeds in the garden of the Lord. It is simply inevitable that it should be so under the existing method, for two reasons: first, because each church, "looking out for number one," is primarily or largely concerned about getting supporters, and therefore seeks to locate itself where the conditions appear most favorable to this end, without much regard to other churches already stationed in the same district; and, second, because there is no adequate appreciation of the fact that the churches need to help one another in a common warfare upon the common enemy, evil, and in a wise, constructive ministry to the entire community in which they

stand. Accordingly, as long as the competitive policy is pursued, we shall see church-individualism emphasized, each church caring mainly for its own welfare, the more prosperous sections of our cities over-supplied with churches, while the poorer sections are neglected or abandoned to "missions" and other secondary agencies, multitudes of people unattached to centres of religious activity because these are not established upon any comprehensive plan, and the institutions of unrighteousness thriving abundantly because there is no great, organized moral force which they fear. And it is because enlightened men and women are perceiving this outcome as both deplorable and inevitable, under the *régime* that has prevailed hitherto, that they are beginning to consider the possible advantages of Christian co-operation.

In these three ways, then, — through the waning of sectarian strife, through the growth of the idea of human brotherhood and the sense of social responsibility, and through the unhappy consequences of excessive competition among the churches, — there has come about a widespread demand for co-operative effort along all

the main lines of Christian enterprise. It is being felt to-day as never before that the supreme business of the Christian Church, in all its branches, is not so much to fit men for life in the next world as to establish the kingdom of heaven here; and that to this end the really great Christian conflict is not the conflict of church with church, of creed with creed, however erroneous some may be, but rather the conflict of all churches and all positive virtue with moral evil and unspirituality.

Now, arising out of this fresh, strong feeling, which has grown up during the last half-century, increasing with each decade, there have been realized already several forms of practical Christian co-operation which are doing great good. The Evangelical Alliance, the Young Men's and the Young Women's Christian Associations, the International Sunday-School Commission, the Liberal Congress of Religion, the Interdenominational Missionary Conference, — these, and others that might be named, have been conspicuous expressions of this new spirit in modern Protestant Christendom; and they have been

fruitful, not only of pleasure and inspiration to their participants, but of wise suggestions, plans, and activities for the actual conduct of Christian work.

It is this same holy, spontaneous, and judicious spirit that underlies the earnest and very general desire for Christian unity, about which much has been said in recent years. While, undoubtedly, it has been urged by Pope Leo XIII. partly for ecclesiastical reasons, because the Church of Rome ever seeks to bring the rest of Christendom into harmony with itself, yet it would be mere cavilling at him and the great cause not to believe that he feels the folly of division and the sin of strife as keenly as any other intelligent man. Millions not of his fold share this feeling with him. The waste of resources and the inefficiency of the work, as well as the discord and spiritual losses, resulting from the rivalry of sects, have intensified the conviction among thoughtful people of all denominations that some better principle than competition can be found, and that this principle must lead at least to "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace;" and therefore various attempts have

been made to discover a basis upon which the divided Church may reunite its sundered members. It must be acknowledged that no such adequate basis has yet been proposed; and perhaps the general discussion of the subject thus far may be fairly summed up by saying that it has resulted in establishing, quite clearly, these two conclusions, namely: first, that formal, organic union, upon any old ground of doctrinal or ecclesiastical uniformity, is impracticable for the present at least, and probably for all time to come; and, second, that, nevertheless, co-operation among the churches is greatly to be desired for the efficient service of mankind, and that it must be possible to secure this in some wise and just way, with due regard to the great principle of freedom of thought. However important organic union may be deemed, — and it will doubtless continue to be an ideal ardently cherished by some of the Master's most devoted followers, — it has become increasingly plain that it must be conceived as a goal rather than as a beginning, and that one of the very first steps in the long pathway that may lead to it must be co-operation in the spirit of brotherliness and

human helpfulness. Hence the consideration of the question of Christian unity has served, not only to express the growing desire for Christian co-operation, but to emphasize the need of it, and in some measure to prepare the way for it.

A more promising product of this new spirit is springing up in the voluntary association of churches for practical work. Taking the existing churches of a given community just as they are, and federating them through some central co-ordinating agency, not upon the basis of doctrinal agreement or the acknowledgment of any ecclesiastical authority, but upon the basis of a common, earnest desire to overcome evil with good, and a determination to try to make the principles and spirit of Christ's teaching actually triumphant in society, we get a form of Christian co-operation that seems feasible and hopeful. Somewhat as the Charity Organization Society of a particular city associates the various existing charitable or philanthropic agencies therein, and initiates enterprises that appear to be needed, and seeks constantly to subserve the interests of the entire community by helping all these be-

nevolent activities; so a society or committee is created to associate or federate or organize the churches, by correlating their scattered, independent labors, by furnishing them with information and advice, and by seeking simply to help them help one another in the great work of promoting the Christian religion and an improved social order. This is what the federation of churches means,—interdenominational, non-sectarian, practical Christian co-operation. We have it occasionally and spasmodically in temperance effort, and in seasons of so-called evangelistic labor; but we ought to have it continually and steadfastly in all kinds of common, helpful work in the moral and religious service of mankind.

The most prominent instance of such church federation in America is in New York City. In the year 1895 some of the leading citizens of the metropolis, both lay and clerical, of various denominations, formed a society to be known as "The Federation of Churches and Christian Workers in New York City." Its object was declared to be "to bring the organized intelligence and love of" the "churches to bear upon the material, social, economic, civic, and spiritual

interests of the family life of" the "city, and through interdenominational conference and co-operation to meet its every religious and moral need." This object was to be effected by the following threefold method: —

"(1) By a thorough investigation of various sections of the city, in co-operation with the churches in such sections, for the purpose of obtaining data on which to base an accurate knowledge of the social life and of the churches, in order to determine action appropriate and necessary to secure the well-being of the home-life of each section.

"(2) By the co-operation of the Federation with existing agencies to meet the needs disclosed.

"(3) By stimulating the creation of new agencies wherever "existing agencies" might "prove inadequate."

"Each church in New York City" was to "be represented in the Federation by its pastor and two lay members — one man and one woman." [1]

Upon this wise plan work was begun, and the sociological canvasses of the Fifteenth, Seventeenth, Nineteenth, and Twenty-First As-

[1] Constitution, p. 15.

sembly Districts, whose tabulated results have been published by the Federation, have been extremely valuable. For a thorough understanding of the nature, scope, and worth of the investigations thus conducted, the reader must consult the various reports; but the condensed statements herewith subjoined will give a hint of the conditions disclosed and the information furnished for the benefit of all concerned, and will clearly indicate the necessity for some such federated activity.

1. "One District" — the immediate vicinity of First Street to Fifth Street and Avenue A to Third Avenue — "with a population of 16,391 bodies has one saloon to every 111 inhabitants, and one church to every 8,196. . . . Each of these churches has at least 7,000 persons outside of its clientele whom it cannot possibly reach by even its indirect influences."[1]

2. Another district, bounded by Canal Street, Broadway, East Houston, and Bowery, with a population of 28,266, has 179 saloons and 3

[1] The substance of this and the accompanying statements is given by the Chairman, Rev. Dr. J. W. Hegeman.

churches; or one saloon to every 158 persons, and one church to every 9,422. "Beyond the reach of these churches are 8,000 souls for each church."

3. "In the third district the situation is worst of all. Among 49,359 inhabitants there is one saloon to every 208, one church to every 9,872. With such a ratio, what are our churches going to do to save our city? Such evidence that these people do not want the church is the very reason why the churches should distribute their full energy among them so as to cause them to want a church. . . . In this one parish 27,000 souls beyond the touch of the churches!"

4. "We have made special investigations of a section on the west side of the city uptown. This section includes the old Ninth, Thirteenth, Fifteenth, and Seventeenth Assembly Districts, containing about 200,000 inhabitants. The churches distributed there are 7 Baptist, 1 Lutheran, 9 Methodist, 6 Presbyterian, 5 Reformed and United Presbyterian, 7 Episcopal, 12 Roman Catholic, and 9 other denominations. Every church or chapel is worked to its utmost, and yet there are more than 100,000 souls beyond the reach of all these churches.

"In a section between Twenty-fourth and Fifty-

ninth Streets, west of Eighth Avenue, there is but one church to 10,561 of the population. In the same, west of Ninth Avenue, one church to 14,850. West of Tenth Avenue, one to 31,926. West of Tenth Avenue, between Fortieth and Sixty-fourth Streets, there is only one church. Here are 46,563 people living in that district."

5. "It is said that between Eighty-sixth and One hundred and thirty-eighth Streets, east of Fifth Avenue, there are 223,000 souls, and that a certain denomination has but one church in that district. In the same district, west of Fifth Avenue" — that is, in a much more prosperous region— "there are 72,000 souls, and this denomination has nine churches among them!"

"When throughout the city you trace the direct and indirect influences of church life upon the people, you find a churchless population as large as the city of Brooklyn."

6. Moreover there is abundant evidence to prove that, by this policy of church-individualism, even under the best of circumstances, each denominational church fails to reach a large percentage of its own sympathizers. The New York Federation's report[1] for the Twenty-First

[1] Issued in 1899.

Assembly District, lying mainly between Central Park and the Hudson River, says: —

"Roman Catholicism, therefore, in the Twenty-First Assembly District has an efficiency of 87.8 % in discovering and attaching to homes of worship its people, while entire Protestantism has an efficiency of only 51.7 %, and no phase of it reaches an efficiency of above 80 %, except Reformed Presbyterianism and the Disciples, which together number only 26 families; while the phase of it attracting 100 families or over that reaches the highest percentage of efficiency, the Baptist body, scales only 66.1 %, and the lowest efficiency is shown by Congregationalism with less than 30 %.

"It is quite apparent . . . that the efficiency of the Protestantism of the District is not due to lack of means; for the strong Episcopal churches of the district have 45.4 % of their people without a church home, whereas the financially weak Baptist churches of the district have only 33 % of their people without a church home. Well-to-do Presbyterianism, with $1,100,000 worth of unencumbered property, still has 34.4 % of its people without a church home."

Other figures might be cited to show that substantially similar ratios exist in the efficiency

of the various churches in reaching and holding their children through the Sunday-school.

The foregoing facts reveal an unsystematic, unequal, and inadequate distribution of the Christian churches in a great city, together with a high degree of inefficiency on the part of many of these churches in reaching their own people; and they quite clearly prove that church-individualism is not a successful method of wisely stationing the centres of Christian activity in a dense population. Plainly, therefore, something is needed to supplement the principle of autonomy, in order to prevent the evil results which appear to be inevitable without it. This "something" is *supervision*, — the allying, aligning, and directing, in a comprehensive spirit and plan, of the constructive forces of the entire community. Such oversight, headship, generalship, it is the object of the Federation of Churches to supply. It is simply a form of voluntary co-operation that seeks to express the combined wisdom and devotion of all the churches through some central agency that undertakes to subserve the interests of all by intelligently co-ordinating their efforts.

Since the organization of the New York Federation, the idea has spread widely, and has already borne fruit in the formation of similar movements in many cities, in a number of States, and in a National Federation, effected at Philadelphia, February 5 and 6, 1901.[1] Without going into details in any case, and without describing the significant though somewhat different work in England, it will be well now to present concisely the ruling conceptions involved in this new phase of practical Christian co-operation, and to point out the large field and the urgent call for its operations.

1. There is a recognition, tacit if not explicit, of the essential unity *already existing* in the Christian Church. In time past so much has been said about divisions and differences, and so much account has been made of doctrinal or ecclesiastical disagreements, that people generally have failed to appreciate the larger unity which has actually prevailed in spite of all sectarianism and controversy. But now it

[1] For particular information respecting these, see the first issue of "The Federation Chronicle," April, 1901, 83 Bible House, New York.

begins to be clear that the Christian Church is, after all, *one* Church of Jesus Christ, — one Tree of Life having, of course, many branches; and if it bears various kinds of fruit, it is because in its growth among the nations, through the ages, there have been numerous grafts: but it is one Tree still, with one life-giving sap flowing through its veins, and subsisting by divine power in the one common soil of human nature. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."[1] This one spirit is the Christian spirit, the Christ-like spirit; and it is only fair to admit that it is possessed in some measure by every branch and twig and leaflet of this great Tree of Life. The frank and joyful recognition of such possession is not only an indispensable prerequisite to Christian co-operation, but also one of the crowning triumphs of the influence of the gospel in human life.

2. There is a growing conviction that this spiritual unity is quite sufficient for practical co-operation in the main things that concern the

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 13.

churches in common. Doctrinal agreement and ecclesiastical uniformity are not essential, except for subordinate purposes. The churches of the country should be like the schools of the country, — each working in its own way, each animated by the Spirit of Truth, each inspiring its members to further researches and attainments; but all sharing with one another whatever new light may be received, and all co-operating to advance the welfare of mankind. It is the vital motive and the high purpose that really unify, and that should be considered as unifying; and all the rest should be left secondary, for such varied regulation as diverse groups may determine. It should be enough for Christians to acknowledge themselves disciples, that is, pupils, of the one Great Teacher, Jesus Christ; to leave one another perfectly free to learn as best they may; to recognize and honor all who look for light and try to follow it; and to co-operate gladly with any who seek to promote the vital interests of the kingdom of heaven, however imperfectly it may seem to be done in many cases.

3. There is an increasing apprehension of the thought that the business of the Christian

Church, in all its branches, is to bear fruit, — as Jesus himself said, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."[1] It is set in the world to do the Master's work, by teaching and serving mankind in all helpful, Christ-like ways. It is not ordained to rule; it is ordained to serve. It is not to be ministered unto; it is to minister, and to give its life a ransom for many. It does not exist for its own sake, but for the sake of human welfare. Its characteristic, dominant spirit must always be *the spirit of service.*

4. In order that the various churches may adequately serve mankind by serving the community in which they stand, they must work together; their diverse activities must be coordinated; they must have some sort of practical direction. The Roman Catholic churches have such supervision by virtue of their organic inclusion in the great Ecclesiastical System which governs each and all with absolute authority and with marvellous efficiency. But the Protestant Churches have no such *general* organization or oversight; hence their multiplicity, their

[1] John xv. 8.

haphazard efforts, their weakness, and the large degree of failure that attends them. Their great need is *comprehensive administration;* in other words, co-ordination and direction; and this calls, not indeed for a central authority, but for a central service, — a cabinet of information and counsel, that shall seek to unify and guide all by subserving all rather than by dictating to any.

Such co-ordination and direction, however, must be voluntary; there must be a free association for mutual help in the work of social betterment; and the autonomy of each co-operating church must be duly respected. That is to say, the supervision which Protestantism needs must be consonant with the nature of Protestantism, — it must be voluntary and not compulsory, and it must aim to serve and not to rule the churches. We secure some such administration in political, civil, and industrial matters; why not as readily in the practical affairs of religious work?

5. This general, co-ordinating supervision implies that behind each individual church there should stand the sanction and power of all the churches in the community, be it a city, a village,

or a rural neighborhood; that churches should be stationed in the community after counsel and advice representing the united churches; and that consolidation of churches may take place, sometimes, upon such counsel and with such advice, to the advantage of all concerned.

It also implies that each church, thus stationed and morally supported, should be put in charge of a certain field, besides its own members drawn from anywhere; that it should know thoroughly its own district, and should care faithfully for it in all respects concerning its moral and spiritual welfare, — knowing the number of families residing therein, where they live, how they live, their religious attachments or the lack of them, as well as the helpful and the baneful influences at work within the territory; and that it should seek, by the aid of the counsel of the advisory board or federative committee back of it, to foster constructive agencies tending to lift the life of the whole section slowly but steadily to a higher level.

Thus it appears that throughout the arrangement the interests of the community are made paramount to those of the church; and all the

forces of all the churches are marshalled with reference to the most efficient service of the whole people.

Now, looking at this scheme in a broad way, we see that what we have here is really a proposition for a new alignment of the churches. Hitherto they have ranged themselves in denominational groups, large and small, along lines of doctrinal or ecclesiastical demarcation, being set off from one another by questions of creed or of polity or perchance of ritual; nor is it too much to say that they have been antagonistic to one another quite as frequently as they have been friendly, and that the interests of society at large have suffered while they have striven about non-essential issues. But now at length we have the first-fruits of a new spirit, the spirit of Christian co-operation, frankly avowed, boldly proclaimed, and realized in a wise federation of Christian forces, not so much for the propagation of any dogma or the upbuilding of any institution as for the promotion of the moral and spiritual welfare of all mankind, and for the upbuilding of each individual into some measure of the Christ-like char-

acter. Is it not a hopeful augury? Does it not show that Protestantism is profiting by its experience, and is on the way to complete its development by supplying its own deficiencies? And what must it not mean for the good of any city or village or commonwealth when all the Christian churches begin thus earnestly to cooperate for the overthrow of evil and the establishment of concrete righteousness! Surely it marks the dawn of a new day for modern Christendom that this holy and wise spirit has risen upon the churches with healing in its wings. God speed it onward!

The logical outcome of the principle herein considered, when fully developed and thoroughly applied, will be the supplanting of our present unsystematic multiplication of denominational churches, many of which must be small and feeble, by a Protestant Parochial System, somewhat similar to the Roman Catholic system, yielding a few large and strong churches, each having a staff of clergy and trained workers, and stationed with reference to the needs of the population. As things now are, the numerous

small churches cannot have ministers of first-class abilities, and are compelled to wage an incessant life-and-death struggle for a mere existence, while costing their constituents more per family than larger and better churches do. Withal the impression which such churches make upon the community is not powerful enough to command the attention, respect, and support of the people. There must be a reaction from this weakening and wasteful policy; already it has reached its limits; and consolidation or extinction is the grim but salutary alternative presented to many a little church to-day. It is high time for wise men and women to grapple with the problem and to advocate, against whatever criticism, a plan of Christian organization and administration more worthy of the great interests of the gospel in human society.

With some such result reached in the cities, there will be a different but not less effectual reform in the country districts. Co-operation is as needful there as in the towns; and often it must be co-operation between the town churches and the rural churches: for, in some of our older States especially, the country districts have been

so largely drained of their best talent, and so reduced in prosperity by modern industrial changes, that they are not nearly so strong in moral and religious respects as they were a generation or two ago; and the cities which have gained at their expense need now to turn around and extend to them the helping hand. The fact is that the adequate religious care of rural neighborhoods is one of the serious problems confronting the Christian people of our time. It cannot be solved at all without the wisest and most earnest co-operation of all the churches concerned in the difficult situation.

Another vast benefit that must ensue from such Christian co-operation as this chapter pleads for will be the noble peace that shall fill the churches, and win the approbation of mankind, and teach the nations to put away strife. Who can wonder that people have held aloof from the churches on account of their divisions and contentions? Who can doubt that their thorough exemplification of the great principle of co-operation for the good of the world would command the respect, love, and support of multitudes who are now indifferent or hostile, and would go far

to establish peace on earth and good-will among men?

In this year of grace, 1901, millions of people have read, upon one of the great towers at the Pan-American Exposition, the following threefold inscription: —

> "The Brotherhood of Mankind
> The Federation of Nations
> The Peace of the World."

The Christian churches of America have it in their power to lead toward a realization of the sublime ideal thus admirably presented by practising among themselves the blessed, fruitful principle of co-operation. Will they hear and heed this high call of God for a new achievement in this new century? I verily hope so.

THE OUTLOOK FOR SPIRITUAL RELIGION.

THE OUTLOOK FOR SPIRITUAL RELIGION.

AFTER a careful study of the significant developments which religious interests have undergone in recent times, it is well to forecast the immediate future. A true understanding of the past renders its best service by furnishing a wise guidance for the present; but our present duties cannot be adequately considered without some reference to the ends that lie directly before us. It is not much that any man can do to shape the course of events; but the little that he may do is of sufficient moment to require of him the most enlightened and conscientious conduct of which he is capable.

I think the friends of pure and undefiled religion are chiefly concerned for its spiritual welfare. They do not ask so much about the prosperity of institutions as about the progress of the truth; for they know that, while institutions are important, both as forms of expression

and as means of usefulness, they are subordinate to the spirit of life that lies within them, even as the human body is subordinate to the soul. When we come to care more for the soul of religion than for its body, we shall be most sure to experience its quickening power, most willing to devote ourselves to its essential interests, and most ready to sympathize with every movement that represents some phase of its vital influence.

Now to such people it is a gratifying fact that the prospect is very bright at present for the development of a higher form of spiritual religion than the world has yet seen. The outlook is not altogether undimmed, but on the whole it is remarkably encouraging; and I believe we shall do our work better to-day and to-morrow if we perceive clearly the main respects in which this is true. We shall be likely to march with firmer tread if we see plainly the pathway in which we are to go.

I. Let us begin by reminding ourselves what religion really is. Straightway we have to remember that it presents two aspects, — the subjective and the objective.

1. Subjectively considered, religion is a native

instinct or sentiment, as truly an element in the spiritual constitution of the human soul as is reason or love or the moral sense. As such it is a living reality, — not an imaginary product, but a natural energy; and it may be as justly called one of the great forces of the world as may electricity or gravity.

We must duly appreciate this fundamental fact that the religious instinct in man is Divinely given by nature. It is not an afterthought, but a forethought. It is not imparted by miraculous process in a second birth, but is implanted by natural process in the first birth. It is not a new life communicated through a sacrament, but an original life generated in the creation of a spiritual being. Therefore it is not something to be superadded, but something to be evoked and developed. Here is the bed-rock upon which all agencies that undertake to minister to the religious needs of mankind must establish themselves. Any other basis will prove to be quicksand.

2. Objectively considered, religion is a form of worship or practice or teaching or work, or it may be a combination of all these, and may

result in social organization for various purposes. As such it is an expression of the primary religious impulse, together with other feelings and thoughts accompanying it; for men often put into their outward institutions of religion, not only the religious spirit which is the soul of them, but also much of their philosophy, art, government, and philanthropy. Thus it frequently happens that what we call the religion of a people — meaning its rites, doctrines, creeds, politics, and enterprises — is really a very complex affair; in fact, in the higher stages of civilization, it is usually one of the most complex and delicate, as it is surely one of the highest and finest, products of the whole process of human development.

Regarding religion in this external way, we can easily see how different groups of people, different tribes and nations, in different countries and ages, and in varying stages of culture, must have widely different religious systems. It is equally plain that these outward phenomena may change greatly, while the spirit of life lying back of them may abide and increase.

> "Our little systems have their day,
> They have their day and cease to be;"

but behind them all, throughout the world, there is the deep heart-hunger of the race which is a breath of divine aspiration, which is essentially the same everywhere and always, and which will take on new forms of manifestation as the older ones fail and fall away. We must constantly bear in mind this distinction between the transient and the permanent facts that religion is forever exhibiting.

II. Let us next observe that the objective element in the religious history of the world has generally received far greater attention than the subjective. It was natural that it should be so. Primitive man lives mainly in the realm of the senses; yet he is haunted by thoughts and feelings respecting the supersensuous; and, being unable to comprehend these because of his undeveloped state of mind, but being nevertheless possessed and profoundly impressed by them, he is impelled to try to meet the requirements which they seem to lay upon him by using the resources at his command, which, of course, are almost wholly of a material nature. Hence it comes to pass that the objective side of the primitive man's religion is made up of outward acts, observances,

and sacrifices which are usually very strict, minute, and elaborate. Dr. Daniel G. Brinton says that "no opinion can be more erroneous than the one sometimes advanced that savages are indifferent to their faiths. On the contrary, the rule, with very few exceptions, is that religion absorbs nearly the whole life of a man under primitive conditions. From birth to death, but especially during adult years, his daily actions are governed by ceremonial laws of the severest, often the most irksome and painful character. He has no independent action or code of conduct, and is a very slave to the conditions which such laws create.

"This is especially visible," he continues, "in the world-wide customs of totemic divisions and the *tabu*, or religious prohibitions. These govern his food and drink, his marriage and social relations, the disposition of property, and the choice of his wives. An infraction of them is out of the question. It means exile or death. The notions of tolerance, freedom of conscience, higher law, are non-existent in primitive communities, except under certain personal conditions which I shall mention in a later lecture."

After quoting Professor Granger's remark that "religion in the ancient world comprised every social function," and the statement of another writer that "the idea of a separation between Church and State is utterly foreign to all the religions of antiquity," Dr. Brinton instances an example of the same truth regarding the all-pervasiveness of religion among savage peoples today, in the case of the Dyaks of Borneo, of whom an observer says: "When they lay out their fields, gather the harvest, go hunting or fishing, contract a marriage, start on an expedition, propose a commercial journey, or anything of importance, they always consult the gods, offer sacrifices, celebrate feasts, study the omens, obtain talismans, and so on." [1]

The meaning of these facts becomes plain if we take the evolutionary view of the world. In rude, primitive stages man, feeling the religious impulse working strongly in his soul, but not understanding it, not knowing himself to be a spiritual being, and therefore not knowing what else to do, devotes himself to a multitude of external observances which impart a religious

[1] Religions of Primitive Peoples, pp. 37–39.

character to nearly all his activities. These outward aspects of religion may, or may not, involve an ethical significance; quite as often it is absent as present; and indeed there is frequently a positively immoral quality attaching to them. In fact, as one studies the various religious systems of mankind outside the pale of Christianity and Judaism, he is struck with the lack of the moral element in the vast majority of cases; and thus he sees that, for countless millions of the human race in the long, dark past, religion has been mainly a very crude, unspiritual affair, having an immense body of externalities and, behind them, only a dim perception of the divine realities which forever beset the souls of God's children. Slowly have these outward, objective forms diminished, in those portions of the race that have grown in wisdom and spiritual stature, while the more interior, subjective aspects have gradually increased.

III. Let us now consider the relation of Christianity to this development. Immediately we see that, as a system of teaching, it addresses itself to the great, common religious spirit in man; and three or four extremely important facts con-

nected with its genesis, its influence, and its history claim our attention.

1. In its earthly origin — say what you will of anything more — it was directly preceded and produced by the most spiritual religion of antiquity, which had been developed through two thousand years or more of racial experience. The Israelitish people had a genius for what may be called an ethical religion; in them the spirit of righteousness dwelt with unusual power; and their religious faith, worship, and teaching became more vital, personal, and devotional, more full of mercy and good fruits, than was the case with any of their contemporaries. Jesus of Nazareth, the Founder of Christianity, was a descendant of this race, "born of the seed of David according to the flesh;" and it is the plainest of facts that in him, in his character and teachings, we see the highest and finest out-flowering of all that was deepest, purest, and most beautiful in the historic religion of his ancestry.

2. Jesus Christ, however, lifted this ancient religion to a loftier level, into a clearer atmosphere and a brighter sunshine, than it had ever reached before. He perceived, enunciated, and

inculcated its essential truths, while stripping away their accompanying accretions of error; he exemplified the holy spirit of loving communion with God and loving service to man; he revealed God's character as paternal and perfect, and showed Him as nearer to the human soul than aught save consciousness can be, — the very Breath of its life; and thus he opened the way for each human being to come into vital and dear relations with its indwelling Divine Father. So he transformed religion from being largely a thing of forms and observances to being a spirit of life in the soul, prompting to the most reverent, ethical, loving, and gracious conduct.

By what insight or inspiration Jesus was enabled to render this inestimable service to the religious interests of mankind I do not need to try to say. He explained it all as fully as it can be explained when he said, "I can of mine own self do nothing: the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works." What I care most about is the fact; and the indisputable fact is that, somehow, this great Teacher, this spiritual Seer, this heavenly Soul, gave to the world the most exalted and vital religion, simple, natural, prac-

tical, and full of blessing, that has ever been known, — superseding Judaism, surpassing all other ethnic religious systems, and constituting a spiritual gospel which is truly "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

3. But this highly spiritual religion, going out into the world to do its work among the nations, had to take men as it found them. In order to be accepted by them at all, it had to become subject to their limitations, — had to cast in its lot with their imperfect lives, mix with their evil passions, affiliate with their sins and errors, share the fortunes of their philosophies, sciences, and governments, — and so be debased and corrupted by the very life of the world which it came to redeem by just this intimate contact and this immanent process. Accordingly Christian history, from the days of the apostles until now, shows us how the gospel of Jesus has been submerged — though never lost — in the flood of human speculation, dogmatism, and institutionalism which was bound to engulf it, but which was destined to be purified by it. Jewish apocalyptic, Greek philosophy, Roman statecraft, together culminating in mediæval

ecclesiasticism, have all but buried out of sight the simple, quickening, personal, spiritual teaching of the Son of Man; and although, since the days of Martin Luther, it has been struggling to free itself from these historic grave-clothes, it has been a slow and painful process, which is not yet complete. The cerements of the tombs of the past still cling about it; but the critical thought of our time, friendly though uncompromising, is fast finishing the work of removing them, — only to reveal the fair form of a newly risen body of divine truth, instinct with life, radiant with beauty, and strong to serve and save mankind. Herein lies the great significance of the religious agitations and revolutions of our age, — they are recovering the simple, vital, spiritual teaching of Jesus Christ, freeing it from the human impedimenta of the past, and giving it an opportunity to speak its own uncorrupted and heavenly message to the yearning and responsive hearts of God's children.

4. We must not pass over this long history, however, without remembering that the most essential and substantial doctrines of the gospel, including the main facts concerning the life and

personality of Jesus and the great ideas, principles, and spirit which he inculcated, have never been wholly obscured. They have lived, and somehow they have shed their holy light even through the thickest clouds of human ignorance and sin, and have slowly thinned and dispelled them. Nor should we forget that it is mainly because of the preservation of the story of Christ's life and work, and likewise the story of the work and writings of his apostles, in the form of the New Testament literature that his religion has been thus perpetuated without far greater corruption than it has suffered, and is now so clearly recoverable by us. I doubt not that his teaching would have survived and wonderfully blessed the world, even had there been no written record of it whatever, so true and potent was it; but, at the same time, if it had depended wholly upon oral tradition for its perpetuation, filtering down to us through the nations of Europe with all their gross imperfections, how much more perverted it would have been, and how long it would have taken the world to come to anything like a clear and true apprehension of his pure, spiritual religion!

Duly appreciating this fact, one can hardly be grateful enough that there has been a Bible, and that it has survived all the storms of European history; and although it, too, has been often sadly misunderstood, and has been made almost a fetish sometimes, yet it is now emerging into the light of intelligence and taking its natural place as the artless record of a people that was wondrously educated in spiritual things, and as containing for its most precious legacy the story of the life and teaching of the world's Redeemer.

IV. Now from this sweeping glance at the vast religious evolution that lies behind us, showing us that the religious instinct in man is God-given, and that the gospel of Jesus Christ addresses itself to this instinct, not to create it but to educate it, we can see that, after all the centuries of development, the most advanced portions of Christendom are already in the dawn of a new and glorious day for spiritual religion. The process will go on. The progress that has been made is the surest pledge that still further progress will ensue. The knowledge which has so marvellously accumulated is not going to be, in the long run, the enemy of vital religion, but

rather its powerful ally. Liberty, likewise, is going to be its mighty friend. Above all, the spiritual hunger of the Christian world is going to crave the bread of life which Jesus of Nazareth blessed and brake. The churches are not drifting away from him; they are drawing nearer to him. He leads on their development; in him is life, and the life is the light of men; and the purest men everywhere who have seen that light are longing to realize in themselves more of that life. The best demand of the age, in every branch of the Christian Church, is for just such a simple, vital, personal, loving, saving, spiritual religion as that Peerless Teacher exemplified so beautifully, and poured forth into the souls of men like a river of the water of life. Be sure that it will go on cleansing the world, — cleansing individual lives of sin, cleansing social conditions, cleansing governments, and also cleansing the other religious systems of the nations by purifying, rectifying, sanctifying, vitalizing, and spiritualizing them.

Some difficulties and dangers, however, confront this great movement. Aside from those which subsist in the wide, out-lying world, —

the vice and crime, the strife and war, the greed and cruelty, the ignorance and superstition, the disease and misery of the millions of people who are as yet untouched or but slightly influenced by the spirit of Christ's gospel, — there are still some serious obstacles to the progress of spiritual religion within the Christian churches. Without dwelling upon them, I may mention such as these: The lingering influence of ancient speculative thought; the gross misconceptions, originating therein, of the miraculous officialism of Christ's work; the elaborate dogmatism resulting largely therefrom; the overshadowing power of ecclesiastical institutions; the narrowing effects of sectarianism; the deadening effects of Biblical literalism; the undue scope of emotionalism; the insidious seductions of high-wrought ritualism; and the excessive reliance upon organization. Against all these old and sturdy evils, more baneful than the new skepticism of which we complain much, we shall have to contend very earnestly if we desire to promote the interests of a vital, spiritual religion.

In order to overcome these obstacles, we

must have a clear conception of what spiritual religion really is, and then we must realize it in our own lives, and so supplant a traditionary, formal, dogmatic, sacerdotal religion by exemplifying something better.

1. What, then, is meant by the term *spiritual religion?* Perhaps each person must answer this question largely for himself; and yet the best answer that one man can give must have something good and true in it for other men. As far as my own apprehension of the truth goes at present, I find the clearest answer to this question and its implications in the teaching of Jesus Christ, as it reaches me through the alembic of history and is confirmed by my deepest and highest religious experiences.

It is plain that Jesus made religion a concern of the inmost soul. He attached little importance to externalities of any sort, — to times and seasons, to places and ceremonies, to institutions and ordinances; but the burden of his emphasis was always upon the inner spirit. He taught men to let their alms-givings, prayers, and fastings be in secret; he told them that hatred and illicit desire were virtually as reprehensible

as murder and adultery; he showed them that they must forgive one another from the heart, if they themselves expected to be forgiven by the Father. The Sermon on the Mount is full of this kind of teaching. To the woman of Samaria he said that neither Gerizim nor Jerusalem was a necessary place of worship, but that the true worshippers were those who should worship in spirit and in truth. He criticised some of the religious leaders of his time because they were so very strict about all outward observances, while yet they were inwardly selfish, bigoted, proud, and unmerciful. He summed up the nature of his great message by saying, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life."[1] The only external feature upon which he may be said to have laid stress was deeds of kindness; but no one can doubt for a moment that he would have every such deed spring from a spirit of sincere benevolence in the heart. So the very essence of his religion was love, — love to God, and love to man. This, of course, is the most familiar of

[1] John vi. 63.

statements to Christian people; but its truth can never be too clearly apprehended.

The conduct of Jesus corresponded with his utterances. So far as the artless Narratives enable us to see him, the picture they yield is of the simple consistency of perfect genuineness on his part. "He lived the precepts which he taught." He never seems to have spoken for effect merely, or to have acted to be seen of men. He was natural, honest, straightforward, and always the same poised, serene Teacher, perfectly sure of his footing. While he observed the festivals and customs of his people to a considerable extent, he was never a slave to them, and did not hesitate to set them aside if occasion warranted,—sufficiently indicating his own position and that of his followers by saying, "The Son of man also is lord of the Sabbath."[1] Indeed, it was largely this indifference to established usages, and to religious institutionalism in general, that angered the ruling classes and led at last to his unhappy fate. He was not at all a sacerdotalist; he was emphatically a vital spiritualist. As such, both his words and his example

[1] Mark ii. 28.

make him the one great, clear, consummate Exponent of spiritual religion presented by past ages, — as if to warn us from the very rocks upon which we are forever in danger of dashing ourselves, and as if to reveal for our benefit the simple beauty and power of a human life brought into perfect harmony with the Divine Spirit!

Now, I am absolutely sure that my own deepest and purest religious experiences afford me a strong confirmation of the truthfulness of my Master's teaching in this respect. These experiences have been in no wise exceptional, but on the contrary have been very limited and undoubtedly inferior to those of many a better man. Yet when one can thoughtfully and honestly say that his own best life — poor as it may have been — has borne witness to the soundness of the principles and spirit of Christ's gospel, he is simply proving by experiment the truth whose supreme test is to be found in just this way — by practice. Thus he is doing what the architect does when he erects a building, — demonstrating the trustworthiness of his working principles in the only possible manner. It is one of the surpassing excellences of the religion of Jesus,

being spiritual, that it can be so demonstrated. Well, then, as far as the testimony of my own best life goes, it is all to the effect that Jesus Christ was profoundly true and right in inculcating the kind of religion which I have called spiritual, and which I have tried briefly to describe in the two preceding paragraphs.

Judging thus out of my own understanding of the teaching of Jesus, as tested and confirmed by personal experience, I should say that spiritual religion is supremely an affair of the soul. As such, it involves at least these elements: the clearest and truest *thought* that one is capable of reaching; the deepest and purest *feeling* that may fill the heart, — the feeling of reverence, awe, dependence, and yearning for communion with the Divine Spirit; the strongest *inner conviction* or *assurance* that one can have of the spiritual verities; the soundest *principles of conduct* issuing from this inner life and its development through experience; the most sincere and thoroughgoing *morality* that may be prompted and realized by the Spirit in the inner man; the *right ordering*, therefore, of the outward conduct; the wisest *active benevolence* that

may put one into truest co-operation with God; and all the sweet, sanctifying, upbuilding *influences* of the Life of God in the human soul which one, thus living, aspiring, praying, loving, serving, trusting, sorrowing, rejoicing, may experience year by year. Something like all this must be the character of any vital, spiritual religion; and it is the highest glory of our race that it is realized in some measure by all who have learned, in whatever way, to recognize the spirit of holiness in their hearts.

2. It is this kind of religion — inner, vital, potent — that all the churches of Christendom are really instituted to promote. In order to promote it in any degree, each individual must personally apprehend and realize it as best he can. There is no other way. External institutions of every sort are distinctly secondary. The primary and indispensable requisite for the communication and transmission of spiritual truth is the *possession* of that truth by some one. Only life can give life. When one soul is quickened, it can quicken other souls; but not until then. Our constant temptation is to rest in customs, forms, ordinances, machinery; our constant need

is to vitalize all these by vitalizing ourselves through contact with God as we seek to feel after Him and find Him within. We must ourselves be in tune with the Divine Spirit before there will be music enough in our lives to bring other lives into the same blessed harmony. This is the fundamental truth upon which we must rest in all our practical conduct of religious work.

Standing squarely upon this ground, where we recognize the natural and inalienable religiousness of man, and seeking to promote a vital, spiritual type of religion by vital and spiritual processes rather than by external means of any sort, we may be encouraged to hope for its growth in the world by seeing what powerful allies are working with us toward the same great end.

(1) Knowledge is one of these; for the ministry of knowledge is a ministry not only of enlightenment, but also of life. If truth is of God, then an understanding of the truth must be in some measure an apprehension of God. St. Clement of Alexandria used to contend that the human reason was a revelation of God; by which I suppose that he meant that the operations of thought, the exercise of imagination and

judgment, disclosed God, and that thus God manifested Himself to men. I believe we need to appreciate the validity of this conception, and so to remember that one of God's ways of working in our human world is through the thinking, the learning, of each soul. Therefore the increase of knowledge must eventuate in an increase of spiritual vitality; and while for a time it will remove "those things that can be shaken" in the historic structure of our systems of belief, it will but subserve to test and demonstrate the everlasting stability of "those things which cannot be shaken." Hence we are to welcome all genuine knowledge as the mighty coadjutor of spiritual religion.

(2) Another such helper is the influence of Nature, which has been rediscovered in our age. One familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures cannot fail to perceive the power of this influence throbbing through those majestic writings, so that Emerson was wholly right in saying, —

> "Out from the heart of Nature rolled
> The burdens of the Bible old."

While just now we are under the sway of the scientific interpretation of Nature, and therefore

are prone to see her mainly in her rigorous, cruel aspects, we may rest assured that this is not the only interpretation, but that the poetic spirit and the religious spirit will reassert themselves and continue to be fed at her bountiful board. "Through Nature to God," the title of Mr. John Fiske's book, is a true phrase which indicates an open way, broader now than ever before, by which the spirit of man may seek communion with the immanent Spirit of God. Therefore I believe that the influence of Nature will prove ultimately a most potent factor in displacing the religion of the cloister and the creeds by the healthier religion of the field, the sky, and the stupendous panorama of those infinite realms where the Almighty Life pulsates with quickening energies that touch responsive chords in the human soul.

(3) Again, the goodness of the world at large must contribute, however unwittingly, to the growth of that spiritual type of religion of which virtue and love are most important constituents. The old idea of the utter depravity of human nature has given place to a recognition of the inherent dignity and excellence of a being made in the image of God. While imperfect, in process of

development, and therefore still partially evil, man is nevertheless a child of the Eternal Goodness; hence the spirit of the Divine Paternity is in his heart, prompting him to moral endeavor and to all affectionate behavior. This native excellence, filling the world with varied forms of beneficence and loving kindness, is forever co-operating with all other influences, conscious or unconscious, which are building up a nobler, fairer, and more benevolent religious life among men.

(4) The direct ministry of Jesus Christ, reinforcing whatever of such native goodness there is in mankind, must continue to be the strongest single factor in the production and extension of a vital, spiritual religion. He said that he came that men might have life, and might have it abundantly. We all feel that he is the one great life-giver whom history makes known to us. His supreme mission is to quicken human souls into newness of life. As men come more and more clearly to see him, to understand him, to experience the contact of his mighty spirit upon their spirits, they are sure to receive impressions and inspirations which must vitalize and spiritualize the religious energies that slumber or

struggle in their hearts. He is now being made known to men more widely and more truly than ever before: how, then, can it be otherwise than that his personal, vivifying, holy influence shall promote everywhere the spiritualization of the religious life of the world? His power is not waning. His words are the words of eternal life; and his example is the brightest light we have, shining out of the past, to guide us into the future. Let us be sure that those words will not prove false, and that that light will never fail.

(5) Finally, beneath and through all other influences working toward the end here considered, is the indwelling life of God in the lives of men. This is the most precious conception in the religious thought of our age. God is not only with us, but within us; He is not only our Creator and our Father, but also our Everlasting Inspirer. By a living process He works within us to prompt, urge, check, reprove, correct, guide, comfort, sanctify. In all this He deals with us as with sons, in Paternal love. He will never leave us nor forsake us; but some of His disciplinary dealings with us may be terribly severe, if we need such. He is forever our Refuge and

Strength. We may find Him and know Him, because He is not far from every one of us, but in Him we live and move and have our being. Without and within, above and below, behind and before, the immanent God is our Light and our Salvation. Whatever else may fail, He abides and works and loves forevermore. He is the ultimate Source of all spiritual life in us; He is the ultimate Goal of all our spiritual development; upon Him we may depend to build up the children of men, through the ages, "into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Religion, therefore, must become increasingly a conscious communion, harmony, and cooperation with the indwelling Divine Spirit that is the Soul of the universe.

When the vital, spiritual type of religion herein depicted shall have been more fully realized, and all the churches shall have begun to feel its mighty influence, we shall soon see the fruits of it in a more thorough spiritualization of our whole civilization. At present our civilization is predominantly materialistic and intellectual: it must be spiritualized, or it will fail of its

legitimate fruition : it is the great business of the Christian Church to help spiritualize it; and when the Church itself becomes profoundly quickened and vivified by the power of a truly spiritual religion, it can and will fulfil this sanctifying mission for every human interest in our world. Therefore I believe I am justified in saying that the highest product of recent developments, particularly during the nineteenth century, is that spiritualization of religion which has taken place already to a gratifying extent, but which it will be our solemn duty to promote with all our strength in the twentieth century. Here lies the great responsibility of the Christian Church, and especially of its teachers and leaders. If it shall be adequately met, the blessings that will surely follow in due time will surpass our fondest dreams at present.

The conclusion reached by the foregoing review of the spiritual conditions, forces, and tendencies of our age is, that we are ever to cherish, inculcate, and exemplify, as best we can, the religion of faith, hope, and love.

We are to have that faith in man which is essentially an intelligent, deeply grounded, patient confidence in his spiritual potentiality; and that faith in God which is an enlightened understanding of the Divine Order that upholds the universe, and a spirit of sweet resignation to His wise and righteous will.

We are to have that hope for the continued progress of civilization, for the growth of the kingdom of heaven, and for our own personal spiritual development, which rests upon the sublime facts of our human nature, of the evolutionary method of the universe, and of the eternal power of the immanent God; and which yet does not ignore any of the terrible phenomena and forces of evil in the world, but rather nerves us to fight them in the might of the Holy Spirit.

And we are to have that love which is born of God and makes us know most truly what God is; that love for Him which is the divine life of the soul, which is our strength, our peace, our joy; and that love for our fellow-men which is the spiritual sunshine of the world, which fills all our human relationships with sympathy and helpfulness, which abates all strife and needless

suffering, and which instils into the hearts of men an ineffable sweetness and gladness.

"And now abideth faith, hope, love, — these three; and the greatest of these is love."

Thus our study culminates in a renewal of the Christian spirit, attitude, and purpose; under whose influence we can say, as we hold both the past and the future in our vision, seeing how in the course of time God makes evil fail and right prevail, —

"The outworn rite, the old abuse,
The pious fraud transparent grown,
The good held captive in the use
Of wrong alone, —

"These wait their doom, from that great law
Which makes the past time serve to-day;
And fresher life the world shall draw
From their decay.

"God works in all things; all obey
His first propulsion from the night:
Wake thou and watch! — the world is gray
With morning light!" [1]

[1] Whittier, "The Reformer."

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